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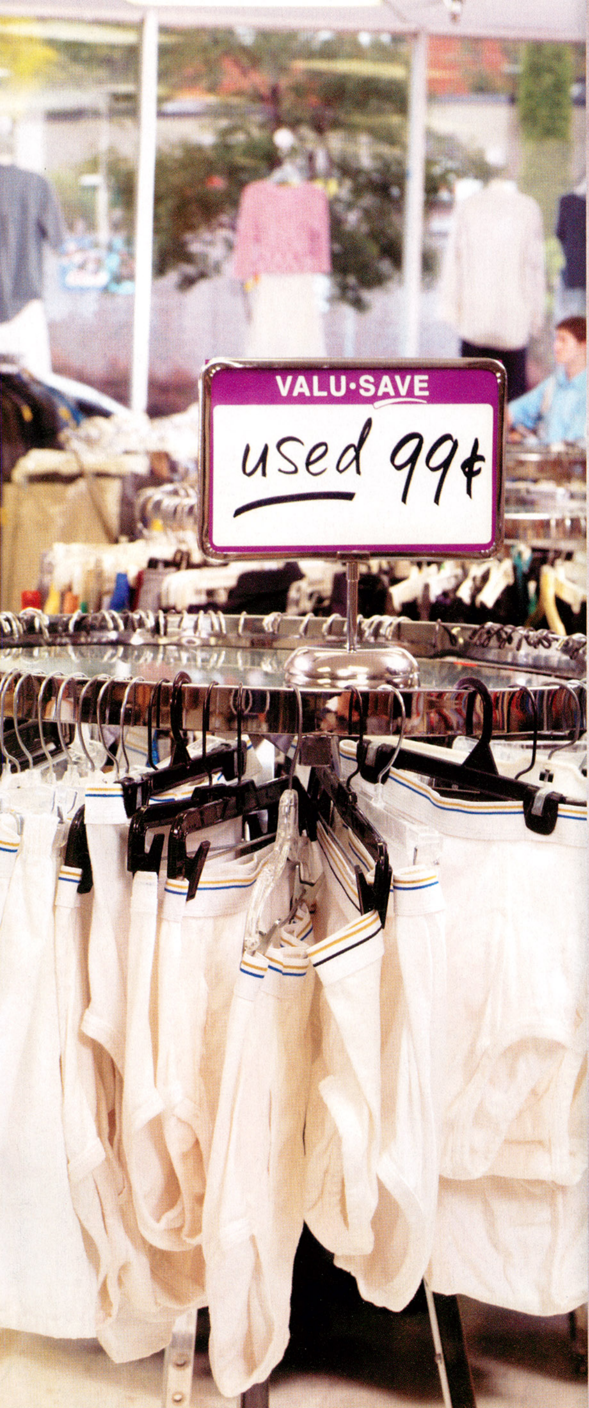

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CONTENTS OCTOBER 2005

FEATURES

34 Into the Fire
The new Harry Potter game has us caught in its spell.

42 The Art of War
Judging by what we've seen of Spartan: Total Warrior, the horses in ancient Greece were HUGE!

46 NP Top 200
The countdown of our 200 favorite Nintendo-system games of all time kicks off.

48 Return of the King
We check out the home of King Kong, and no, it's not Skull Island.

54 Inside Zelda
You'll just want to pinch Satomi Asakawa's characters on the cheeks.

58 Land of the Lost
Lose yourself in the scenery in Konami's new survival game Lost in Blue.

64 Trace Elements
NOA's Ann Lin helps unravel the mystery behind upcoming DS game Trace Memory.

68 2-D or Not 2-D
Faster systems and fancier graphics haven't slowed developers' love for 2-D games.

76 Hero Worship
Treasure busts out the heavy artillery for Gunstar Super Heroes.

78 Hulk's Bosses Need a Beating
Keep your shirt on—we show you how to smash this group of baddies.

82 War-Torn?
Heads up! We have your Advance Wars: Dual Strike strategy covered.

90 Build the Ultimate Weapon
Over 15,000 ways to shoot first and ask questions later.

Get a leg up on the competition. 82

Cast Flipendo on me next! Puh-lease?!?

34
Harry and friends show off the latest runway fashions.

42
Pika . . . CHUUU!

64
You look as if you've seen a ghost.

Anyone know a good dentist? 48

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CONTENTS

That sensation you're feeling is coming from our burning-hot previews.

26
SSX MAKES FRESH TRACKS; BATTALION WARS GOES OFF THE GRID; SPIDER-MAN DOES WHAT A SPIDER CAN; PHOENIX WRIGHT DELIBERATION CONTINUES; TAK TALKS THE TALK; X-MEN SIGNALS THE APOCALYPSE

PREVIEW OCTOBER '05

DEPARTMENTS

8 Pulse
We analyze Sonic's coolness factor, address errors in the magazine, and reveal the true meaning of love.

14 News
Can you gu3ss which gam3 w3'r3 cov3ring in N3ws this month?

26 Previews
Battalion Wars shows us the future of military attire, and that future is plaid.

95 Reviews
Nintendogs has been so good, it deserves a treat.

104 Community
If he who dies with the most toys wins, this guy's the frontrunner.

110 Quiz

112 Contacts
We hope it's the only boring page in the whole issue.

113 Next Month

30
Dude, you don't have to get all hot under the collar.

104
Next on "When Mario Strikes Back"—the plumber gets his revenge.

We have the cure for red-eye. Pg. 98

14
For his next trick, Tony Hawk grinds the entire world—at once.

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Pulse

Dirty Harry?

Harry (as in Harry Potter) shouldn't be a dirty word, but some gamers disparage any franchise that has been embraced by young players. Mario, Pokémon, Kirby and the like get a bad rap in some circles, because the games' characters "look young." And yet all of these franchises have introduced sophisticated and innovative gaming ideas—ideas such as open 3-D worlds, complex trumping battles and characters that borrow abilities from enemies—that have been adopted by plenty of hard-core games. Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire covers new ground for the Potter series with cooperative, action-oriented gameplay. And just as the book and the upcoming movie hinge on dark plot twists and more-mature characters, so does EA's game. From what we've seen, Goblet of Fire will make your day, no matter how old you are.

Beyond EA's wizardry, this month's NP explores 2-D platformers—an old-school genre that's getting serious attention thanks to the Nintendo DS. We also track down the developers of Peter Jackson's King Kong in the wilds of France, and we go behind the scenes to hear from key members of the Trace Memory, The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess and Spartan: Total Warrior development teams.

This month's strategy features will help you draw up a solid battle plan in Advance Wars: Dual Strike, run rampant over the Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction's bosses and choose the right Gun Data for every mission in Sigma Star Saga. And as if that's not enough, we've got cool previews, hard-hitting reviews and a bonus magazine dedicated to Nintendogs people. Do you feel lucky, or what?

Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

GET CONNECTED

I have a few questions about the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. First, if you had a wireless router at home, would you still be able to play Wi-Fi games? I don't want to have to go to Starbucks just to play Animal Crossing DS online. And second, will there be some sort of USB adapter for the DS that would let you play online games through a computer's non-wireless Internet connection?

D.J.
via the Internet

You will indeed be able to play Wi-Fi games at home via a wireless router. As for a USB adapter, Nintendo has talked about releasing one for the Revolution, but no such device has been announced for the DS.

BRING IN THE CLOWNS

I was looking through Volume 195 when I realized that whenever someone asks you not to reply with a joke, you reply with a joke. I decided to test my theory. So, will you not reply to this message with a joke?

Nate M.
via the Internet

No. Wait, yes. No. Uhhh . . . your mom?

SMELLS LIKE BURNING

Who do you think would win in a fight, a Pichu or Chris?

letsplayball
via the Internet

There's only one way to find out, so we pitted the two against each other. As you can see, it wasn't pretty.

FORGOTTEN FANTASY?

Do you know when Final Fantasy III will come out for the DS, and is it the "real" Final Fantasy III (not the one on the SNES)?

FFgamer21
via the Internet

Square Enix has been mum on Final Fantasy III for DS since announcing the title last year. Hopefully we'll get an update at the Tokyo Game Show in September. And yes, it's the Final Fantasy III that was released on the Famicom in Japan; not the Super NES game that was called Final Fantasy III in the US. (That game was entitled Final Fantasy VI on the other side of the Pacific.)

PET PROJECTS

I can't wait for Nintendogs to be released! I just have one question: If Nintendogs is a huge hit (which I think it will be), will there be similar games to follow? Like Nintencats or Nintenponies?

Julie
via the Internet

It certainly seems plausible, if not likely. We're keeping our fingers crossed for Nintenaardvarks.

LIFE IMITATES ART

Meteos is a fine puzzle game; one of the most fun and addictive to be released in recent years. But ever since the release of this excellent game, I have noticed a strange phenomenon. Upon turning off the game after a good round, I see Meteos whenever my eyes are closed. Not only that, but I subconsciously try to rearrange items in real life and line them up in [rows of] three. Many others have reported that they share this

symptom. Has anyone at NP experienced this as well?

Derek C.
via the Internet

Yes, but Andy's been taking it a step further and hurling various objects at our "home planets."

>LETTER OF THE MONTH

I've been a Nintendo fan for about 15 years now, so you can trust that this is coming from somebody who's seen [the company's] ups and downs. I'm very excited about the Revolution, but I'm worried it's going to be a little too different for developers to produce games for. I think it's more important than anything that Nintendo makes sure they have appealing first-party titles at launch while also striking deals with third-party companies to get exclusive games.

Michael P.
via the Internet

We don't think you'll have to worry about first-party titles. Nintendo has already announced new Mario, Zelda, Super Smash Bros. and Metroid Prime titles as well as an all-new property for the next-gen console. As for third-party support, it seems a little early to pass judgment. A number of publishers have expressed interest in Revolution development, and in a recent interview, Nintendo president Satoru Iwata stated that the system won't be so different as to exclude the possibility for conventional game styles.

SWEET TUNES

I found a great site for video game music enthusiasts. At vgmix.com, you will find hundreds of original songs written by site members, all based off of video games. The eclectic variety and high quality of the songs is enough to keep you busy for hours on end.

Justin B.
via the Internet

GET A HAIRCUT!

I have a question for NP: If there's a gaming Revolution, does that mean there will be game hippies?

Jesse
via the Internet

Yeah, and they'll probably smell bad, too. That's a joke! We kid the hippies!

FLAGMAN

I was searching [for] Nintendo [stuff] on eBay when a Game & Watch handheld caught my eye. It was Flagman, which I remembered from my WarioWare: Touched! game. Flagman had a "buy it now" price of $1,100. Is that really what a Game & Watch is worth today, or is some crazy person trying to rip people off?

Hillary O.
via the Internet

The old Game & Watch handhelds have become quite collectible, and Flagman is particularly rare. At the time of this writing, there's another one on eBay going for approximately the same price.

LOVE IS A MYSTERY

I love Nintendo! Nintendo video games help me think about my girlfriend while playing. They help me love my girlfriend even more. I wanted to tell people how this has helped me with love. Thank god for Nintendo.

Ives I.
via the Internet

Wow, we don't even want to know what that means.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

I like the new style of Nintendo Power, specifically the overall attitude of the writers. For issue #200, will you please do what you did for #100? That is, do a feature on the top 100 Nintendo video games of all time. I'd like to see what changes from the old list.

Nick L.
via the Internet

We'll do you one better. Starting in this issue, we'll be counting down our top 200 games of all time. See page 46 for picks 200-161.

WE REWARD LOYALTY

My mom was looking through one of my Nintendo Powers one day and said that she thought you guys write all the letters in Pulse yourselves so that people could hear what you want them to hear. I said you don't because I have seen some of the names of the [letter] writers on the NSider forums, and she said, "Well, where do you think they get the names from?" Please respond to this letter in the next Pulse so that I can show my mom that real gamers write the letters.

Cody D.
via the Internet

There you go, Cody. And since you believed us over your own mother, we're going to send you a free game. You just have to promise to wave it in front of her and say, "In your face!"

A NEW VAMPIRE HUNTER

I am writing because I am gaining interest in the Castlevania series (due to the preview for Dawn of Sorrow for DS in a previous issue) and I'm not sure which game I should start off with as I wait for the new one. Any suggestions?

Matthew T.
via the Internet

You really can't go wrong with any of them (though the N64 games are the worst of the bunch). Since Aria of Sorrow is the precursor to Dawn of Sorrow, that might be a good place to start.

CRAZY TALK

My boyfriend's number-one pet peeve is when I ask to play Super Smash Bros. Melee with him. He strongly believes that "real" girls should not be interested in video games. I own an N64, a DS, a GCN and even an Atari that I [restored] to working condition. But his mind is set: a hot girl cannot be a gamer. Is he justified with this type of thinking? Do all gamer guys have this sort of mentality?

Becca
via the Internet

Sounds like backward thinking to us. Most gamers would be ecstatic to have a significant other who plays games.

POT CALLS KETTLE BLACK

Hey np crew i keep finding mistakes in all your nintendo power mag. you guys need to write more slower so you dont make more mistakes!!!

guilmon1
via the Internet

So how long did you take to write that letter?

VIGILANTE 8

Hey, what's up with the Vigilante 8 series? Those were pretty cool games. Do you guys know if they will continue the series with a third game?

Cory
via the Internet

The development team behind the Vigilante 8 series, Luxoflux, is currently busy working on True Crime: Streets of New York. We'd be surprised if they didn't return to the popular car-combat series sometime down the road, though.

NOT-SO-FANTASTIC FOUR

Fantastic Four for GCN is way better than a 6.0. George used to be my favorite writer until this happened. Fantastic Four has an amazing amount of levels and stunning graphics. It's a great game!

Steven D.
via the Internet

George responds: "Bummer, Steven. You used to be my favorite reader until this letter. Though Fantastic Four is a great-looking game, especially in advanced levels, it's my opinion that the developers missed an opportunity to make something special out of the quartet's super abilities. As I mentioned in the review, you can get through most of the game by punching and kicking. That's why I gave it a not-fantastic, but still above-average, score."

A WISE READER

I would like to make a quick observation. Unlike most video game magazines out there that are aimed toward hardcore male adult gamers, the newly redesigned Nintendo Power seems to be aimed toward a much more diverse audience. This is proof that Nintendo fans really do come from all walks of life. I was just thinking that if the upcoming Nintendo Revolution is aimed towards as diverse an audience as Nintendo Power magazine is now, it could very well unite the globe and bring world peace.

Fewelljay
via the Internet

COOL SPOT

What's up Nintendo Power? My friend and I keep arguing about a very important matter. Who is cooler, Sonic or Tails? I think Sonic is cooler, but my friend says Tails is cooler. Could you please make a Sonic coolness chart?

GamerBoy92
via the Internet

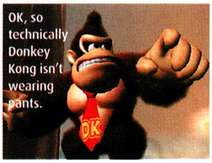
Sure thing.

HUH?

I have been playing Nintendo games since the NES days and I have one question: why can't Nintendo make "good" games? What is it with the swearing, sexual content, gore, etc.? Can't Nintendo make games without naked people and blood spraying everywhere?

Andrew L.
via the Internet

We've passed this on to the powers that be, and they swear they'll tone down the profanity in the next Donkey Kong Jungle Beat.



OK, so technically Donkey Kong isn't wearing pants.

CI MIA

You took out Classified Information! That's one of my favorite parts [of the magazine]! How could you!?!

Ben P.
Alberta

Classified Information will still appear in the magazine from time to time, but only when we've got enough codes and cheats to justify it. Recent games simply haven't contained enough juicy secrets to fill a monthly column.

FIVE WRITERS ENTER, ONE WRITER LEAVES

I was just wondering how all of you at the Nintendo Power office decide who's going to review what game. Because I'm sure nobody jumps up and down saying, "I want to review the new That's So Raven game!"

Hitmon600
via the Internet

We usually have to fight over who reviews each game. It's like Thunderdome.

PUPPY LOVE

I'm a little confused when it comes to the breeds in Nintendogs. I know when you buy one of the three versions, you get six breeds, but I heard that you can unlock all of the other breeds from the other two versions. Was this just a rumor? If not, how do I unlock the rest of the dogs?

Rah Rah
via the Internet

It's not a rumor. You can unlock the other breeds by accruing a certain number of Trainer Points or by trading with another Nintendogs owner in Bark mode. See the New Puppy mini-mag included with this issue for more information.

BEST OF THE BEST?

I've been hearing a bunch of good things about The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess from your magazine. So I've been wondering, do you guys think that Twilight Princess will be better than Ocarina of Time?

Nick M.
via the Internet

That's the million-dollar question. We're enamored with what we've seen of Twilight Princess thus far, but much of the game has yet to be revealed. Only time will tell (no pun intended) if it can measure up to Ocarina.

WE COULDN'T RESIST

What e-mail address do I have to send to if I want to get my questions answered in Pulse? I can't find it in the magazine.

Kyle O.
via the Internet

We keep it very well-hidden.

PLEASE WRITE US:

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E-mail sent to the above address will not receive a response.

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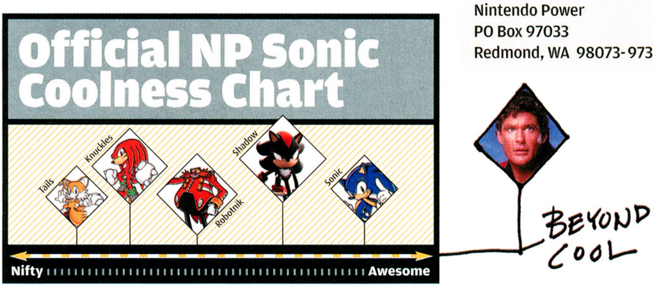

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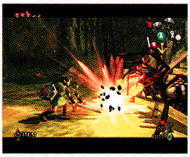
MOST WANTED

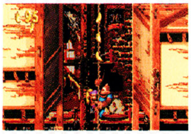
Go to nintendo.com to vote for your most-wanted games and let your voice be heard!



>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

If you think Twilight Princess is likely to give up the top spot anytime soon, we have a bridge to sell you.

1 The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
2 Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance
3 Shadow the Hedgehog
4 Geist
5 Super Mario Strikers



>GAME BOY ADVANCE

It looks like GBA owners like to monkey around. Ouch. Okay, that one hurt.

1 Donkey Kong Country 3
2 Mario Tennis Advance
3 DK: King of Swing
4 Gunstar Super Heroes
5 Mega Man Zero 4

>NINTENDO DS

You still haven't heeded our warnings. Mario Kart Wi-Fi + the NP crew = you getting owned. Believe it.

1 Mario Kart DS
2 New Super Mario Bros.
3 Animal Crossing DS
4 Mario & Luigi 2
5 Lunar: Dragon Song

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

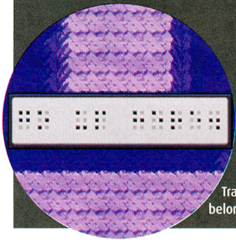
Summer is a slow time for new game releases, as evidenced by the fact that Madagascar is number one on the sales chart this month.

1 Madagascar
2 Super Mario Sunshine
3 Super Smash Bros. Melee
4 Pokémon Colosseum
5 Animal Crossing
6 The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker
7 Kirby Air Ride
8 MVP Baseball 2005
9 Medal of Honor: European Assault
10 Donkey Kong Jungle Beat

TOP SELLERS

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

For the first time in modern history, Super Mario Advance 4 didn't make the top 10. (It was number 11.)



Translation: The world belongs to Pichu.

1 Pokémon Emerald
2 Madagascar
3 Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones
4 *Star Wars* Episode III: Revenge of the Sith
5 LEGO *Star Wars*
6 WarioWare, Inc.: Mega Microgame$
7 Mario Party Advance
8 Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team Protoman
9 The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap
10 *Star Wars* Episode II: Attack of the Clones

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO DS

Don't fret; Meteos's spot on the chart reflects only four days of sales.

1 Kirby Canvas Curse
2 Super Mario 64 DS
3 *Star Wars* Episode III: RotS
4 GoldenEye: Rogue Agent
5 WarioWare: Touched!
6 Madagascar
7 Yoshi Touch & Go
8 Need for Speed Underground 2
9 Meteos
10 Bomberman

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.

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NINTENDO SCOOORES 3 WITH FIFA

SIMS 2 WARDROBE MALFUNCTION?

CHILLIN' WITH THE INCREDIBLES

THE HAWK HAS LANDED

Decked-Out on DS

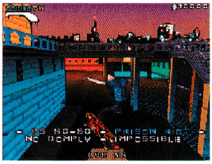
Too much Hawk on the mind? We can't help it. The Hawk series finds a home on the DS, going where no skateboarding game has gone before.

Hawk games rarely disappoint in terms of gameplay, but the series has struggled to reinvent the overall experience from game to game. Until now. The NP staff is in awe of the unique DS version, which pushes the series into new territory with its bold style and crazy customization features. As the screenshots demonstrate, the team has taken a cel-shaded approach to the game's graphics. But screenshots don't do the game justice—you have to see it in motion to grasp how well the graphic style works within the Hawk world. "We wanted to give [Tony Hawk for DS] something that would set it apart from the console versions, as well as bring in a style that is really user- and player-friendly," notes publisher Activision's producer Doug Heder.

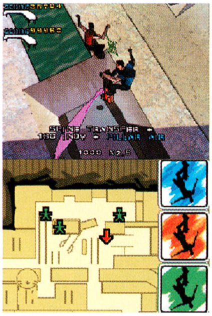
In addition to the new graphic style, Vicarious Visions (the game's developer) has taken full advantage of the hardware functionality with a wide variety of DS-only features. Customization reaches new levels using a touch-screen paint editor that allows players to create their own icons from scratch, which can then be skinned onto boards, shirts and even graffiti tags. In addition, by using the DS microphone players can create custom sound bites, which they can then assign to actions in the game. For instance, you can record yourself saying "Flippin' sweet!" or "Idiot!" in your best Napoleon Dynamite impression, and assign that sound clip to landing a special move or bailing—the options are limitless.

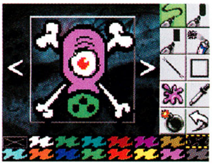
New ways to customize your game are only part of what makes Tony Hawk for DS a unique experience. "When you're playing, you'll realize that you haven't been relegated to a scaled down world at all," explains Dan Wallace of Vicarious Visions. "You can skate through all the interconnected levels for a good long time without ever retracing your steps." To help navigate players through Hawk's massive areas, Vicarious Visions has incorporated a top-down map that displays on the DS's lower screen. In addition, Tony Hawk for DS will include a number of wireless multiplayer modes that will allow players to go head-to-head against other Hawk players. Activision promises that Hawk's wireless multiplayer will be robust, exhibiting all the classic play modes as well as some new ones.

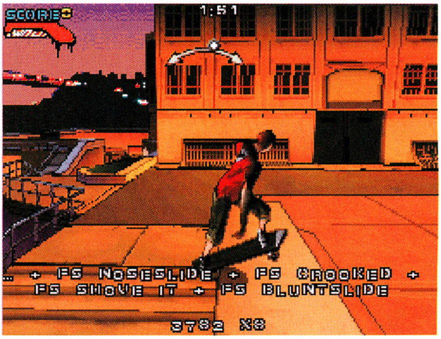
Though the DS game has a new look and a host of other new features, its creators stress that the basics are present, as well. Based on what we saw of the game, we're positive that Hawk purists will not be disappointed. The levels are large, the tricks are plentiful and the play control looks as smooth as ever. Additions to the gameplay include the option to assign special tricks to be triggered on the touch screen, but the ability to play the old-school way is there as well. "I think players will be awed by how beautiful, smooth and faithful to the series the game plays," says Wallace. After seeing the game in action, we couldn't agree more. Tony Hawk for DS is one of NP's most anticipated DS titles this year. Stay tuned for more details about it and about the great-looking GCN version, and expect Tony Hawk for DS to land this fall.
—Andy M.



> **"I think players will be awed by how beautiful, smooth and faithful to the series the game plays."**
>
> **—Dan Wallace, Vicarious Visions**


Head-to-head is just one of the many wireless multiplayer modes.


The touch screen paint editor takes skater customization up a notch.



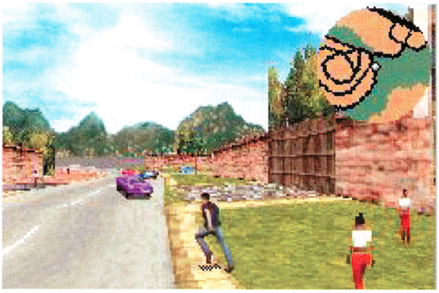
DON'T BE A PLAY3R HAT3R

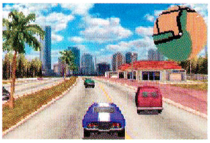
Road-Rage Revival

The only auto-theft series that's gone 3-D on the GBA returns with a grand effort. Driv3r should pack serious heat.

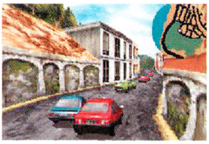
Did sugar gunk up Driver 2 Advance's engine? Presumably so, since developer Sennari had mostly Powerpuff Girls games under its belt at the time—none of them even a racing title. Atari's got much bigger plans for Driv3r; Velez & Dubail, the handheld-racing vets behind V-Rally 3 and Stuntman (both of which set benchmarks in GBA racing) are developing the title.

In Driv3r, the series's tough cop, Tanner, hits the streets of two cities from last year's console game—Miami, Florida, and Nice, France. With a virtual 50 kilometers to explore in each city, players take on the crime world in 25 missions or cruise freely, one hand on the wheel, the other on a gun pointed out the window. Drivers will be able to leave the car to steal any of 25 types of rides. With car chases and free roaming in the works, will Driv3r set a new standard? Thrill-seekers will find out this fall. —Steven G.

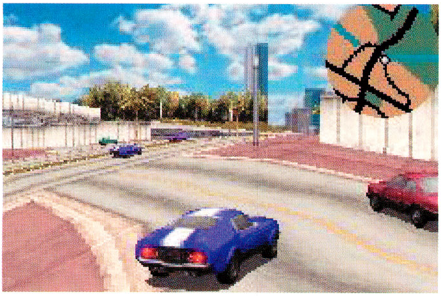


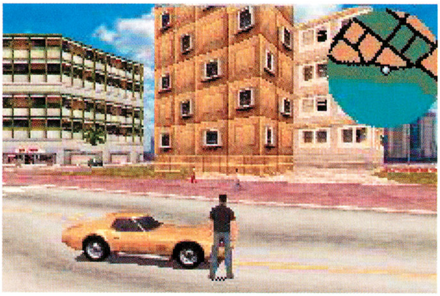


The first 12 missions of Driv3r are set in Miami, where the criminals are cruisin' for a bruisin'.



The criminal underworld will stretch all the way to France for the final 13 driving missions.





SQUARE ENIX KEEPS SECRETS

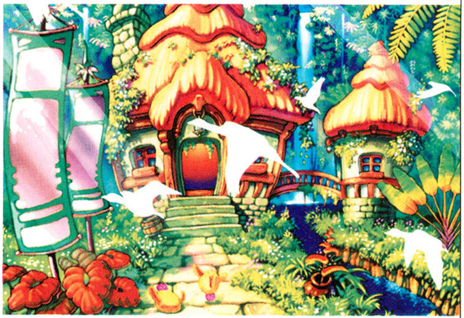
Worldwide Mana?

After planting a seed in DS gamers' minds last year, Square Enix finally grants a glimpse of the next Mana. It's bigger than anyone thought.

Square Enix hasn't discussed the DS entry in its Mana series since August of last year, when the title showed up as a quiet line item on a list of DS games slated for development in Japan. Then at the Square Enix Party, a massive shindig held in Tokyo in late July . . . it was still mum.

But the publisher did unveil a trailer that exposed The World of Mana, its next bold project that uses "polymorphic content," a term that Square Enix has coined for creating multiple windows into a world, gaming or otherwise, as it's currently doing with its Final Fantasy VII resurrection on consoles, DVD and mobile phones.

Clearly the DS game is part of the next multiportal foray. Though no other details are available, curious gamers can get a sneak peek at www.square-enix.co.jp/mana. —Steven G.



Square Enix's site opens with a movie that shows a Mana Tree larger than a skyscraper, then cuts to a village that's drawn into existence. Sure, birds flying by is an artful touch, but watch the fleeting effect just before that: Is it water ripples or wireless pings? Discuss amongst yourselves. . . .

ON THE CATWALK

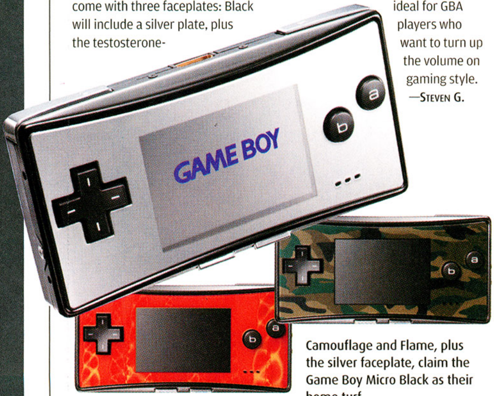
Game Boy Microstyle Revealed!

The launch date is sooner than you think. And the styles are enough to get you started. But, what, no cow spots for Wisconsin?

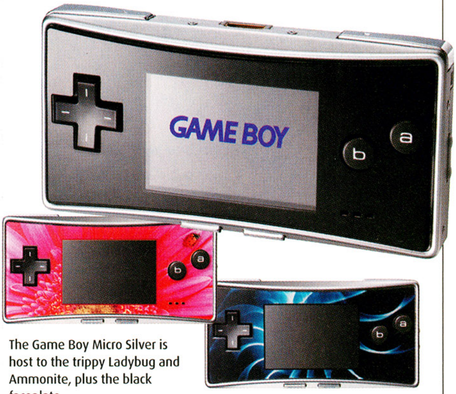
The Game Boy Micro demo zone at this year's E3 drew big crowds to see the device's shockingly tiny size, plus the wide spectrum of styles made possible with the new faceplate-friendly design.

At the release date of the Game Boy Micro set on October 2, two versions of the handheld will be available: Game Boy Micro Black and Game Boy Micro Silver (the color denotes the base look). Each will come with three faceplates: Black will include a silver plate, plus the testosterone-tinted Flame and Camouflage; Silver will have the wild and vibey Ammonite and Ladybug faceplates, in addition to the black one.

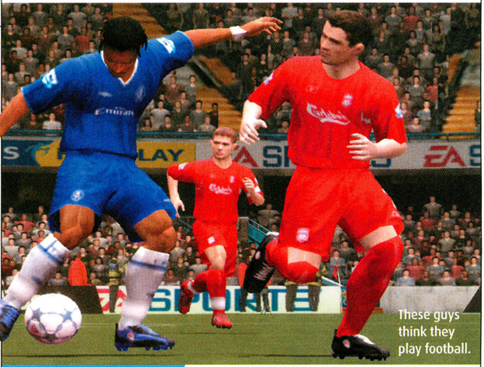
As NP went to press, the price hadn't yet been set for the unit. What we do know is that it has a face that measures four by two inches, can boast a bright two-inch-wide screen, has the heft of a mere 80 paper clips and supports standard headphones, all ideal for GBA players who want to turn up the volume on gaming style.
—Steven G.



Camouflage and Flame, plus the silver faceplate, claim the Game Boy Micro Black as their home turf.



The Game Boy Micro Silver is host to the trippy Ladybug and Ammonite, plus the black faceplate.



These guys think they play football.

OBSESSION BY EA SPORTS

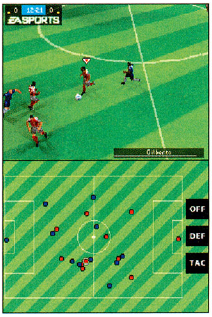
Global Domination

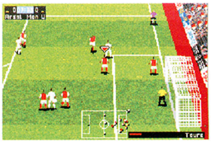
With hundreds of teams, thousands of players and a life-consuming Manager mode, FIFA Soccer 06 is the worldwide soccer fan's raison d'être.

Hugues Ricour is serious. At an EA sports gaming event this summer, FIFA Soccer 06's line producer exclaimed that his goal is for the game to be the greatest sports sim of all time. The game's subject is ripe for greatness. People in the United States can get nutty about American football, but the number of insane fans for what the rest of the world calls football is mind-boggling. The 2006 edition of EA's soccer series feeds the fury with film of great moments in soccer history, 21 licensed leagues and a surprise match at the outset that pits the gamer's selected team against a squad composed of the best players ever to put on a kit.

The game's comprehensive Manager mode gives the player a 15-year-long shot at team-leading immortality with the ability to control budgets, seek out prospects, sign sponsors and engineer tactical formations. The player selects attacking options on the fly, and dribbles and shields the ball with more realistic control than ever before. The gameplay is tuned to give veteran players a new layer of realism, but still allow first-time players to pick up and play with little difficulty.

Since many gamers play sports titles with friends, the developers added the FIFA Lounge, which allows up to eight gamers to manage their own ongoing league play, saved onto a Memory Card. A high ranking earns you special rewards that may give you a slight advantage in your next match. Another soccer fan's dream is player customization. The Create-a-Player option lets gamers determine an athlete's traits, from body type to passing ability, and tweak every aspect to make the player a custom star.
—George S.





The FIFA series returns to the GBA and debuts on the Nintendo DS, complete with 3-D graphics, touch control over throw-ins and corner kicks, and single-card play for two participants.

The Big News. In Short.

Sega has confirmed that **Feel the Magic** has a DS sequel slated for release in Japan. What will dual-screen gamers rub this time? The Japanese version's subtitle translates as **Where Do Babies Come From**; hopefully, we'll find out in North America. . . . EA's putting even more Marvel in **Marvel Nemesis** by adding the comic publisher's creative staff to the console game's roster: writer Mark Millar (*Ultimate X-Men, Ultimate Fantastic Four*) and illustrator Jae Lee (*Uncanny X-Men, Spider-Man*). . . . ABC, CBS, Fox, ESPN—year after year, you never know where you'll see **John Madden** on TV, but EA is one place you can continue to hear the pigskin commentator, thanks to a new multiyear contract. . . . Though Konami has dibs on ***Wallace & Gromit: Curse of the Were-Rabbit***, it hasn't announced platforms or a release date for the games based on this fall's movie. . . . Last year Majesco promised that it would eventually stuff full-length movies onto cartridges, and it's going to deliver this October with the release of three Game Boy Advance Video DreamWorks films: ***Shrek***, ***Shrek 2*** and ***Shark Tale***. . . . Stealth strike! Based on the 1986 movie, **Top Gun** will scream into DS airspace in October. Single- and multiplayer dogfights—check! Pilots named after movie characters—check! Cornball romance—ditched! . . . Blizzard recently caused **StarCraft** and **Diablo** addicts to lose their minds when it sent out a newsletter asking if fans would like to see either series go DS. After listening to NP salivate over the phone, Blizzard informed us that it has no firm plans yet. . . . —Steven G.

SHOVELING HIT?

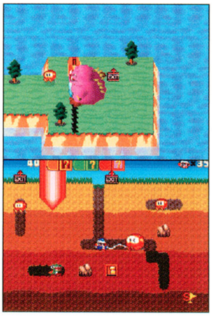
Dig Dug Breaks Through

Namco does the time warp again, sending another classic into the DS dimension. Will Dig Dug mutate as much as Pac-Man did?

It didn't gobble as many quarters, but Dig Dug still ranks high on the list of classics. So we're glad to hear that Namco, which made over its poster boy in Pac-Pix and Pac 'n Roll, has Dig Dug: Digging Strike planned for DS.

In the '82 game, players tunneled in search of critters to pump with air until they popped. The longer it took, the faster the red Pookas and Fygar firebreathers would chase you. You could also pry boulders loose to crush foes—ideally, a whole bunch at once.

Dig Dug: Digging Strike adds to that foundation as its hero explores 3-D islands on the upper screen to find seismic fault lines—all to break off an isle chunk to drown the boss. In both single-player and wireless 2P action, you'll go subterranean into the 2-D classic play, which has been augmented with the new challenge of connecting fault lines until an isle falls apart. Minigame parodies of classics like Rally-X also aid in island-sinking. Expect DDDS this fall. —Steven G.



You'll have the added task of sawing off the chunk of the isle that a boss is on. If you do so incorrectly, you'll be stranded with the beast.

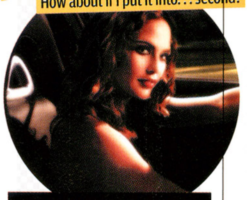
SPECIAL SAUCE

Just In! Added Stuff!

A little somethin' extra is always a good thing. Three games have just added features that may catch your eye. Or at least one will. . . .

Don't think I'm Most Wanted?

How about if I put it into. . . second?



NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED: EA caught model Josie Maran on hi-def, then digitized the footage to make her seem synthetic—all for your NFS pleasure.

NAMCO MUSEUM: What's more '80s than Pac-Man? Cheesy music like "Come On Eileen." Namco's stowing it and four other tunes in the upcoming console game.

Do something!

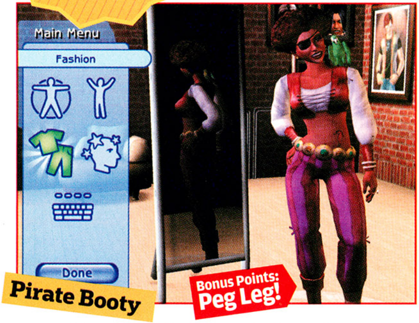
Don't just stand there!

REAL-TIME CONFLICT: SHOGUN EMPIRES: The DS RTS, the first to boast touch-based troop control, will add voice commands to the mix.

WE CHALLENGED!
THROW DOWN!
DID THEY DELIVER?

Sims 2: Up to Our Wildest Dreams?

Will it be all that—or just half of that? EA says that Sims 2 for the GCN will have an insanely robust fashion-creation system, allowing players to select over 540 clothing items with three kinds of customization: style, color (or material) and accessories. The possibilities defy finger counting, so we sent five fashion challenges to developer Maxis to see if Sims 2 will live up to our demented fantasies.

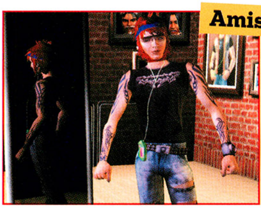


Pirate Booty

Bonus Points: Peg Leg!

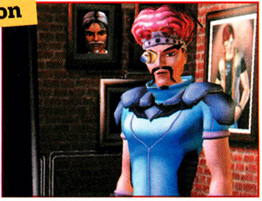
Sure, our "Pirate Booty" challenge was a softball, but Maxis hit a homer that landed right in our lap. Eye patch, peg leg and parrot: there's gotta be a pile of salty style in the game. Good thing—given our obsession with pirates, we'd have forced Sims 2 to walk the plank if Maxis bombed this one!

Amish Headbanger



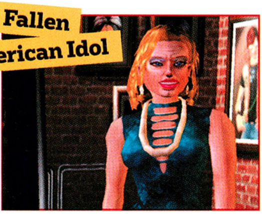
Full beard, no 'stache? It is so, according to the Amish way. Torn jeans, tattoos, and black tee? The gods of metal say verily! Green iPoddish thing? A little fey, but this style still rocks.

Science Friction



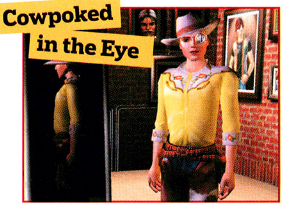
Suit so tight . . . must let brain breathe! Not what we expected from our "Science Friction" challenge, but Maxis gets big props for shock value—and for bringing the Fu Manchu back into style.

Fallen American Idol



Does falling through the trapdoor take a toll on *Idol* wannabes? You bet! Wrinkles caked with makeup, liverspots, arm veins rising to the surface—and all squeezed into a tacky getup with far too much ventilation. Eeeeew!

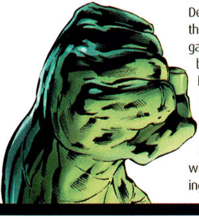
Cowpoked in the Eye



Cowboy hat, cowhide chaps, gun belt, steel monocle—yup. But that shirt!?! Maxis has an offbeat sense of humor, so we'll just pretend that canary yellow doesn't make us want to go for our six-shooter. Four out of five? Sims 2 has got the goods!

DON'T-MISS Calendar

Summer's end means that the drought of games is over. The Hulk leads a month of strong releases that grab our attention and don't let go!



8-23

Hulk threatens spare time.

We'd argue with you over whether The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction is the best Marvel game to date, but every hour of our days is occupied with serving up knuckle sandwiches to starving tanks.

8-29

Mario enters Hall of Fame.

Why hasn't Mario signed an endorsement deal with Nike? He dominates yet another sport with Mario Superstar Baseball, a game that's so fun you won't want to get off your duff for the seventh-inning stretch.

9-6

Aliens wet themselves.

Rebelstar: Tactical Command will make our alien overlords very nervous. The GBA tactics title is gonna show North America how to take a stand! Aliens don't run the show, you say? Don't say we didn't warn you. . . .

9-19

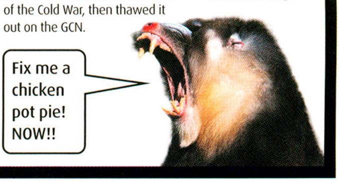
Donkey Kong does it his way while war goes old-school.

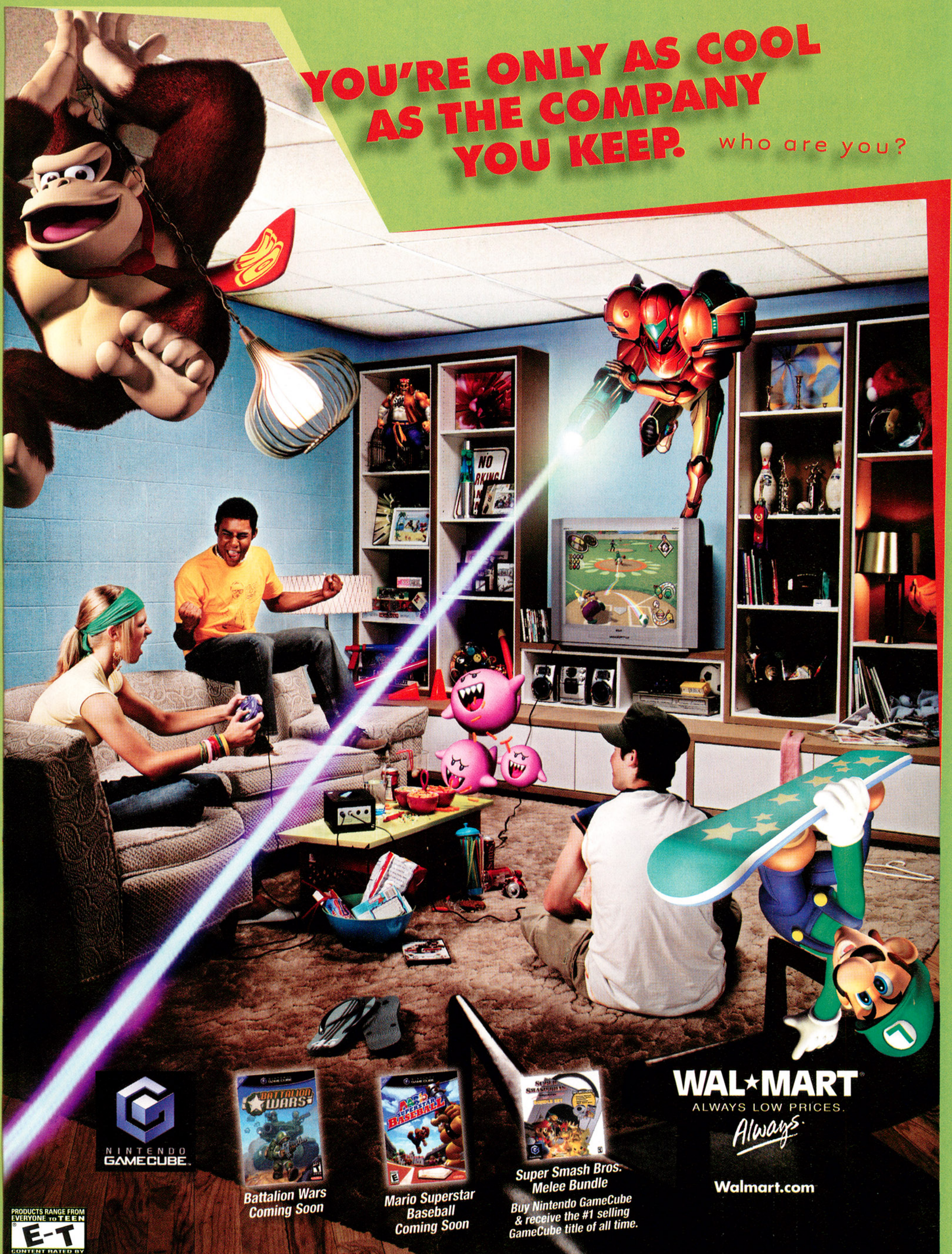
Like classic DK? The ape returns to the old country in November. But this month he braves new territory: L-and-R gameplay in DK: King of Swing. Battalion Wars, however, is 100% classic. It's like Nintendo saved a chunk of the Cold War, then thawed it out on the GCN.

9-20

Zoos grow out of control.

Good news: The PC series Zoo Tycoon hits the DS touch screen. Bad news: The monkey house needs cleaning.




YOU'RE ONLY AS COOL AS THE COMPANY YOU KEEP.
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Mario Superstar Baseball Coming Soon
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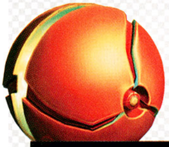
OKTOBERFEST!

Nintendo Nails Down 4

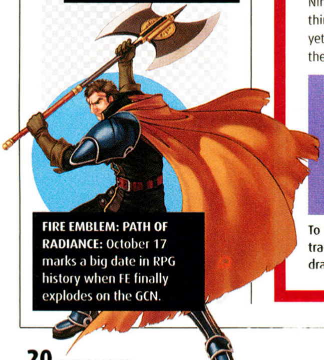
Early October? Late October? The guessing can stop—Nintendo has finally committed.

POKéMON XD: Why's Lugia turned to the dark side? The truth will come to light—on October 3.

DDR: MARIO MIX: You'll get served on October 24 when Mario & Co. do Dance Dance Revolution.



METROID PRIME PINBALL: The DS is a natural for pinball games—Samus will give it a spin on October 24.

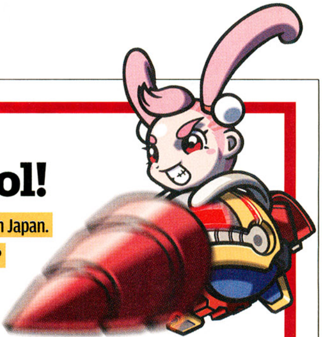


FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE: October 17 marks a big date in RPG history when FE finally explodes on the GCN.

NEWS FROM JAPAN!

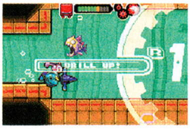
Out of Control!

Three games are due to screw with control tradition in Japan. Does Nintendo have something against bland games?

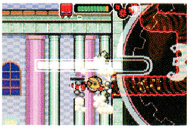


Screwbreaker

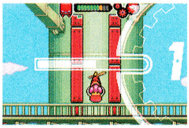
Though gutting walls and goring enemies was endless fun at E3, we did wonder if this GBA game would take fuller advantage of its Breakall Drillbot control, which lets you drill clockwise with R, and counterclockwise with L. Due in Japan on September 22, the game's secrets will soon be out. No fears; the drill is definitely getting a workout.



The contraption's drill acts as a propulsion machine in H20, pushing its rider in all directions.



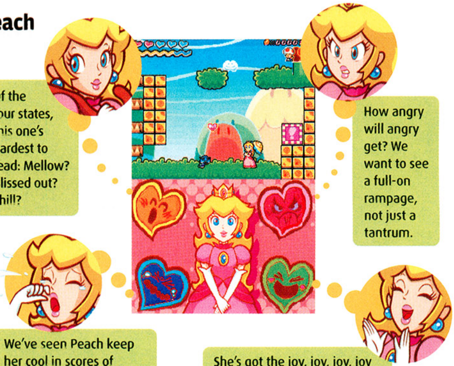
When nosed into spiralling ductwork, the Drillbot can move forward or backward via L and R.



If its drill is inserted into a propeller, the vehicle can power the blades—mad, mad genius!

Super Princess Peach

Ever since news of Peach's DS game was revealed last year, SPP has been in hiding—until now. The platformer seems to go the 2-D Mario route, but we're hearing that the princess will take on the 40-plus levels in her own way. After collecting power-ups that fuel Peach's emotions, players will tap her emotional states to solve puzzles. How will emoticontrol play out? Japanese gamers will find out on October 20.



Of the four states, this one's hardest to read: Mellow? Blissed out? Chill?

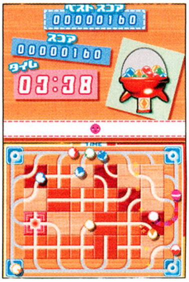
How angry will angry get? We want to see a full-on rampage, not just a tantrum.

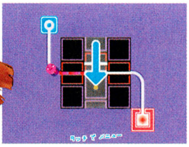
We've seen Peach keep her cool in scores of games—now she bawls?

She's got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in her heart. What will it it do?

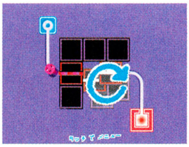
Touch Panic

Nintendo isn't content to rule with Meteos. It's on the hunt for the next big thing in puzzle action, and the Japanese game Touch Panic—no date set yet—may have the formula. It's got a simple concept (roll over balls with the pink ball) and fresh controls (moving track-forming tiles via DS touch).

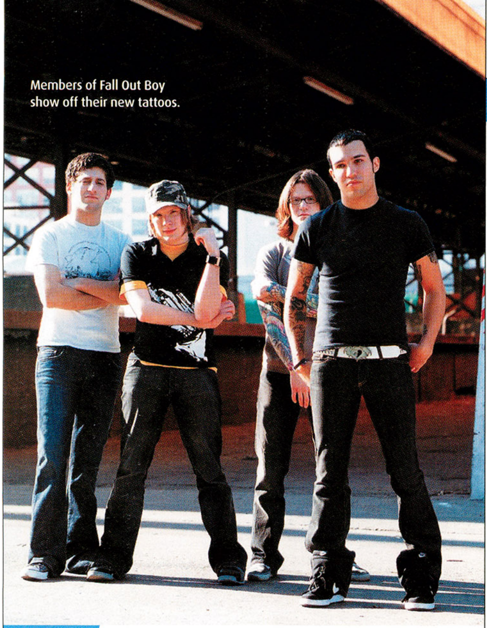




To keep the panic ball on the track, you'll use the stylus to drag tiles around the field.



Whirling the stylus around four tiles rotates their positions—good mental gymnastics.


Members of Fall Out Boy show off their new tattoos.

POP ROCKS

Hot Fusion

Nintendo announces the lineup of bands (and games) for its third annual Fusion Tour extravaganza, coming to a rock arena near you.

Two years ago, Nintendo launched its first Fusion Tour. The event, designed to mix rock music and video games, had headliner Evanescence drawing in the crowds. Last year, Story of the Year picked up the torch for the follow-up. On September 23 of this year, the third annual Nintendo Fusion tour will kick off in Detroit, Michigan, with a solid lineup of bands and playable video games. Fall Out Boy will be leading the pack this year, accompanied by The Starting Line, Motion City Soundtrack, Boys Night Out and Panic! at the Disco. Fall Out Boy's recent single, "Sugar, We're Going Down," has shot the band into the spotlight, earning a number one rank on *TRL* and a lot of attention for the band's second album, *From Under the Cork Tree*. In addition to being rock stars, Fall Out Boy professes to be old-school Nintendo fans, making them a perfect fit for the Nintendo Fusion Tour.

While all five acts fall into the pop-punk category, Boys Night Out and Motion City Soundtrack stand apart from the bunch. Boys Night Out's new release, *Trainwreck*, is a concept album (similar in theory to Green Day's *American Idiot*) that has been earning stellar reviews and some much-deserved attention for the band. Motion City Soundtrack's new album, *Commit This to Memory*, is also gaining steam, and was produced by Mark Hoppus of Blink-182. Boys Night Out and Motion City Soundtrack are playing second and third in the lineup, so be sure to get there early.

In addition to getting their rock on, fans will be able to sample new and upcoming games for all three Nintendo systems, as well as give the Game Boy Micro a spin (literally, if they're playing WarioWare: Twisted!). The tour will even be hosting a sweepstakes for concert-goers to win a limited-edition Fusion Tour-branded Game Boy Micro. But just like at E3 and Comic-Con, the demo stations for The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess are sure to be the most popular attractions. The tour will be hitting 40 states before it wraps up on November 23—check www.nintendofusiontour.com to find out if the Fusion Tour will be hitting your home town. —Andy M.

FANTASTIC TWO

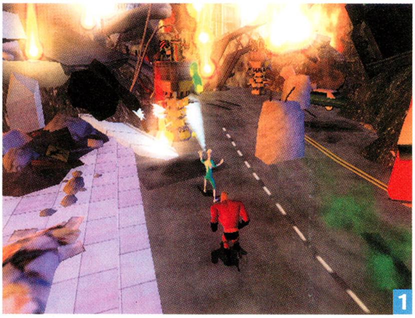
THQ Mines a Hit for More Action Gold

The end was just the beginning for the adaptation of *The Incredibles*. Rise of the Underminer turns the film's epilogue into a new adventure.

The happily-fighting-crime-ever-after finish to the movie that out-fantasticked The Fantastic Four has inspired a video game sequel. The villain that plowed up from the underground at the end of *The Incredibles* was criminal mastermind the Underminer (voiced by John Ratzenberger of *Toy Story* fame). Though the movie shows the whole Parr family pitching in to punish the diabolical driller, THQ's game sequel (due out this fall for the GCN, DS and GBA) has Mr. Incredible fighting alongside old pal Frozone in the Underminer's underground lair. The pair battles robots, but apparently reptilian beasts, mole men and other classic subterranean creatures don't play a role.

Mr. Incredible uses his buffed-up strength, among other upgradable superpowers, to make his way through the network of caves while Frozone freezes enemies and objects, an ability that should come in handy the closer the pair get to the earth's molten core.

The game's use of two-player cooperative play is consistent with that of other THQ fall releases, namely Tak: The Great Juju Challenge and Scooby Doo! Unmasked; the publisher is making an effort to encourage gamer teamwork. A single player, however, can work with an AI-controlled hero and switch control at any time. —George S.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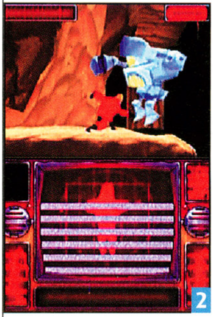
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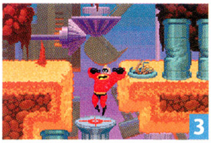

3

1 If you can't stand the heat in the GCN version, send Frozone in to cool things down.

2 The DS title uses the touch screen for easy power access.

3 Like the DS version, the GBA title is a 2-D platforming battler.

GAME WATCH FORECAST

Fact! An iguana will drop its tail when attacked, buying time for a getaway while predators are distracted. The tail grows back over the course of a year or more—and that's not nearly as long as it takes to make a video game! Will your favorite titles be in stores soon?

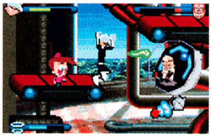
Announced
In Development
Ready for Release

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
Game Title	**Publisher**	**●●● — New games added to the list**

Viewtiful Joe's GCN brawler, due this winter, throws the motley supercrew into the ring to battle for the most important reason of all: earning a starring role in a flick. The game's goofy new title, Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble, fits that bill just fine.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

American Chopper: Full Throttle	**Activision**	**●○○**
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Battalion Wars	Nintendo	●●○
Bratz Rock Angelz	THQ	●●○
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2	**Activision**	**●○○**
Cabela's Outdoor Adventures	**Activision**	**●○○**
Call of Duty 2: Big Red One	Activision	●●○
Chibi Robo	Nintendo	●●○
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●○
Crash Tag Team Racing	VU Games	●●○
Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix	Nintendo	●●○
Disney/Pixar's The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	THQ	●●○
Disney's Chicken Little	Disney	●●○
Ed, Edd n Eddy: The Mis-Edventures	Midway	●●○
FIFA Soccer 06	**EA**	**●●○**
Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance	Nintendo	●●○
Frogger: Ancient Shadow	Konami	●●○
Geist	Nintendo	●●●
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball	**Activision**	**●○○**
Gun	Activision	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●○
Hello Kitty Roller Rescue	Namco	●●●
The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	VU Games	●●●
James Bond 007: From Russia with Love	EA	●●○
Karaoke Revolution Party	Konami	●●○
Kirby*	Nintendo	●●○
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	Nintendo	●●○
Mario Party 7	Nintendo	●●○
Mario Superstar Baseball	Nintendo	●●●
Mark Davis Pro Bass Challenge	Natsume	●●○
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	EA	●●○
Mega Man X Collection	Capcom	●●○
Midway Arcade Treasures 3	Midway	●●○
Mini-Golf Mayhem	Crave	●○○
The Movies	Activision	●●○
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary	Namco	●●○
NBA Live 06	EA	●●○
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●●○
NHL 06	EA	●●○
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	THQ	●●○
Nintendo Pennant Chase Baseball	Nintendo	●●○
Odama	Nintendo	●●○
One Piece: Grand Battle	Bandai	●●○
Pac-Man World 3	Namco	●●○
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft	●●○
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness	Nintendo	●●○
Prince of Persia 3*	Ubisoft	●●○
Room Zoom: Race for Impact	Jaleco	●●○
Scooby-Doo! Unmasked	THQ	●●○
Shadow the Hedgehog	Sega	●●○
Shrek Superslam	Activision	●●○
The Sims 2	EA	●●○
Spartan: Total Warrior	Sega	●●○
SpongeBob SquarePants: Lights, Camera, Pants!	THQ	●●○
SSX on Tour	EA	●●○
Starcraft: Ghost	VU Games	●●○
Super Mario Strikers	Nintendo	●●○
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	THQ	●●○
Teen Titans	Majesco	●●○
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	Konami	●●○
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06	EA	●●○
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter	Ubisoft	●○○
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Lockdown	Ubisoft	●●○
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 4*	Ubisoft	●○○
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	Activision	●●○
True Crime: New York City	Activision	●●○
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: Night of the Quinkan	Activision	●●○
Ultimate Spider-Man	Activision	●●○
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	Capcom	●●○
World Championship Poker	Crave	●○○
World Series of Poker	Activision	●○○
WWE: Day of Reckoning 2	THQ	●●○
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	Activision	●●○
Zatch Bell!	Bandai	●●○



First screens confirm that Nicktoons is on track for an October GBA release, along with the GCN version. The DS game has been delayed to early '06, according to THQ.

GAME BOY ADVANCE

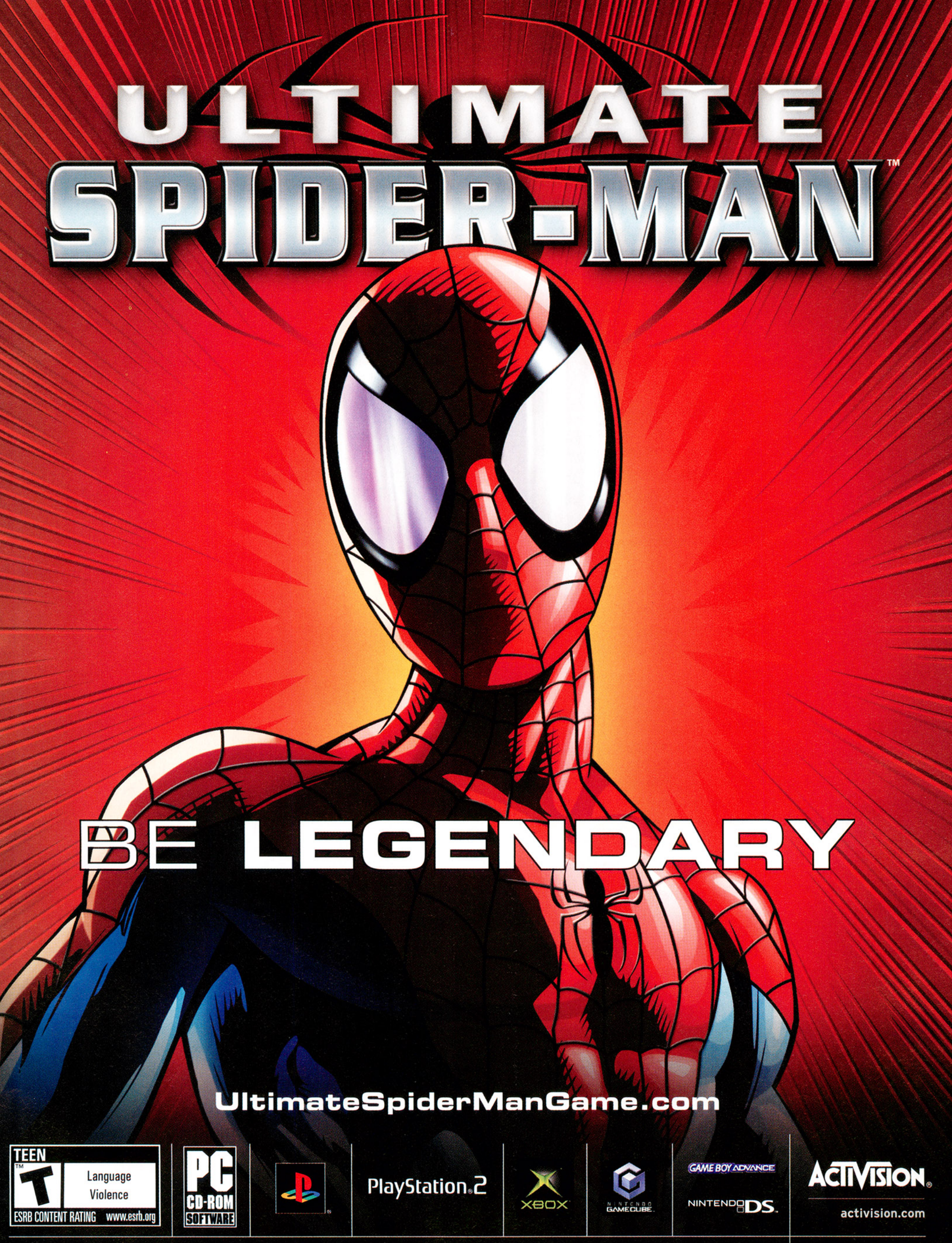
Atomic Betty	Namco	●●○
Backyard Football 2006	Atari	●○○
Backyard Skateboarding 2006	Atari	●○○
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	Namco	●●○
The Bible Game	Crave	●●○
Bionicle: Maze of Shadows	THQ	●●○
Bratz Rock Angelz	THQ	●●○
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●○
CT Special Forces 3: Bioterror	Hip Games	●●○
Danny Phantom: The Ultimate Enemy	THQ	●●○
Disney/Pixar's The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	**THQ**	**●●○**
Disney's Chicken Little	Disney	●●○
Disney's Cinderella: Magical Dreams	Disney	●●○
Disney's Lizzie McGuire 3	Disney	●●○
Disney's That's So Raven 2	Disney	●●○
Disney's The Proud Family	Disney	●●○
DK: King of Swing	Nintendo	●●○
Donkey Kong Country 3	Nintendo	●●○
Dragon Ball GT: Transformation	Atari	●●●
Driv3r	**Atari**	**●●○**
Duel Masters 3*	Atari	●●○
Dynasty Warriors Advance	Nintendo	●●●
Ed, Edd n Eddy: The Mis-Edventures	Midway	●●○
everGirl*	THQ	●○○
The Fairly OddParents!*	THQ	●●○
FIFA Soccer 06	**EA**	**●●○**
Gumby vs. the Astrobots	Namco	●●●
Gunstar Super Heroes	Sega	●●○
Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue	Nintendo	●○○
Hardcore Pool	Telegames	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●○
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	D3PA	●○○
Hugo: Bukkazoom	Namco	●●○
Juka and the Monophonic Menace	Orbital	●●●
Legend of the River King Advance	Natsume	●●○
LEGO Bionicle: Maze of Shadows	THQ	●●○
Madden NFL 06	EA	●●●
Mario Tennis Advance	Nintendo	●●○
Mega Man Anniv. Collection	Capcom	●●○
Mega Man Zero 4	Capcom	●●○
Metal Slug	SNK	●●○
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary	Namco	●●○
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●○○
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	THQ	●○○
One Piece	Bandai	●●○
Payback	Destination	●○○
Pirate Battle	Orbital	●●○
Power Rangers: S.P.D.	THQ	●●●
RebelStar: Tactical Command	Namco	●●○
Santa Claus Saves the Earth	Telegames	●●○
Scooby-Doo! Unmasked	THQ	●●○
Screw Breaker	Nintendo	●●○
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Sea World: Shamu's Deep Sea Adventures	**Activision**	**●○○**
Shaman King: Master of Spirits 2	Konami	●●●
Shrek Superslam	Activision	●○○
The Sims 2	EA	●●○
Sky Dancers*	Crave	●○○
SpongeBob SquarePants: Lights, Camera, Pants!	THQ	●○○
Super Robot Monkey Team Hyperforce Go!	Disney	●○○
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	THQ	●●○
Teen Titans	Majesco	●●○
Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King	Disney	●●○
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	Activision	●●○
Top Spin 2	2K Sports	●○○
Trollz: Hair Affair	**Ubisoft**	**●●○**
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: Night of the Quinkan	Activision	●●○
Ultimate Arcade Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Puzzle Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Spider-Man	Activision	●○○
Ultimate Table Games	Telegames	●●○
Whac-A-Mole	**Activision**	**●○○**
W.I.T.C.H.*	Disney	●○○
Winx Club	Konami	●○○
World Poker Tour 2K6	2K Sports	●○○
World Reborn	Destination	●●○
X-Bladez: Inline Skater	Crave	●●○
Xyanide	Playlogic	●○○
Zooo	Ignition	●●●

Want to open a can of Worms whup*ss on the DS? The crazy worm-on-worm fighting series is headed to the handheld, says developer Team17.

NINTENDO DS

A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	●●○
Advance Wars: Dual Strike	Nintendo	●●●
Age of Empires: The Age of Kings	Majesco	●●○
Animal Crossing DS*	Nintendo	●●○
ATV Quad Fury 2	Majesco	●●○
Barnyard	THQ	●○○
Battles of Prince of Persia*	Ubisoft	●●○
Black & White Creatures	Majesco	●●○
Blades of Thunder 2	SummitSoft	●●○
Boktai*	Konami	●○○
Brain Twisting Game Vol. 1*	Aruze	●●○
Bust-a-Move DS	Majesco	●●○
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow	Konami	●●○
ChoroQ DS	Atlus	●○○
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●○
Crash Tag Team Racing	VU Games	●○○
Dig Dug: Digging Strike	**Namco**	**●●○**
Disney/Pixar's Finding Nemo*	THQ	●○○
Disney/Pixar's The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	THQ	●●○
Disney's Kim Possible: Kimmunicator	Disney	●●○
Disney's Lizzie McGuire & That's So Raven*	Disney	●●○
Dragon Ball Z: Supersonic Warriors	Atari	●●○
Dragon Booster	Konami	●●○
Dragon Quest Monsters*	Square Enix	●○○
Dynasty Warriors*	Koei	●○○
Egg Monster Heroes	Square Enix	●●○
Electroplankton	Nintendo	●●○
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
FIFA Soccer 06	**EA**	**●●○**
Final Fantasy III	Square Enix	●○○
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*	Square Enix	●○○
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	Konami	●●●
Fushigi No Dungeon*	Chun Soft	●○○
The Game of Life DS	Atlus	●○○
Golden Nugget Casino DS	Majesco	●●○
Guilty Gear Dust Strikers	Majesco	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●○
Harvest Moon DS*	Natsume	●●○
Historical Simulation Game*	Koei	●○○
Intern Tendo Dokuta	Spike	●●○
Jam with the Band*	Nintendo	●●○
Johnny Rocketfingers	Conspiracy	●○○
Legend of the River King*	Natsume	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords*	Nintendo	●○○
Lost in Blue	Konami	●●○
Lunar: Dragon Song	Ubisoft	●●○
Madden NFL 06	EA	●●●
Mah-Jong*	Koei	●○○
Mario & Luigi 2	Nintendo	●●○
Mario Kart DS*	Nintendo	●●○
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	EA	●●○
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Double Team	Capcom	●●○
Metroid Prime Hunters	Nintendo	●●○
Metroid Prime Pinball	Nintendo	●●○
Mini RC Rally	SummitSoft	●●○
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed	Bandai	●○○
Monster Rancher	Tecmo	●○○
Moonlight Fables*	Majesco	●○○
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●○○
New Super Mario Bros.*	Nintendo	●●○
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	THQ	●●○
Nintendogs	Nintendo	●●●
One Piece	Bandai	●●○
Organizer Plus	SummitSoft	●○○
Pac 'n Roll	Namco	●●●
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft	●○○
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney	Capcom	●●○
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Disney	●○○
Quad Desert Fury 2	Majesco	●○○
Real Time Conflict: Shogun Empires	Namco	●●○
SBK: Snowboard Kids DS	Atlus	●●○
Scooby-Doo! Unmasked	THQ	●○○
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Sea World: Shamu's Deep Sea Adventures	**Activision**	**●○○**
Secret of Mana*	Square Enix	●○○
Shin Megami Tensei DS*	Atlus	●○○
Shrek Superslam	Activision	●○○
The Sims 2	EA	●●○
Slime Morimori Dragon Quest*	Square Enix	●○○
Sonic Rush	Sega	●●○
Space Invaders Revolution	Mastiff	●●●
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger	THQ	●●○
Spyro: Shadow Legacy	VU Games	●●○
Super Princess Peach	Nintendo	●●○
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	THQ	●●○
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	Konami	●●○
Texas Hold 'Em Poker	Majesco	●●○
Tony Hawk for DS*	Activision	●●○
Top Gun	**Mastiff**	**●●○**
Top Spin 2	2K Sports	●○○
Touch Golf DS*	Nintendo	●●○
Trace Memory	Nintendo	●●○
Trauma Center: Under the Knife	Atlus	●●○
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Spider-Man	Activision	●●○
Vandal Hearts*	Konami	●○○
Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble	Capcom	●●○
Whac-A-Mole	**Activision**	**●○○**
Winx Club	Konami	●○○
World Soccer Winning Eleven*	Konami	●○○
Worms*	**THQ**	**●●○**
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour	Konami	●●●
Zoo Tycoon DS	THQ	●●○

* Tentative title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Violence
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NINTENDO GAMECUBE
GAME BOY ADVANCE
NINTENDO DS
ACTIVISION
activision.com
MARVEL

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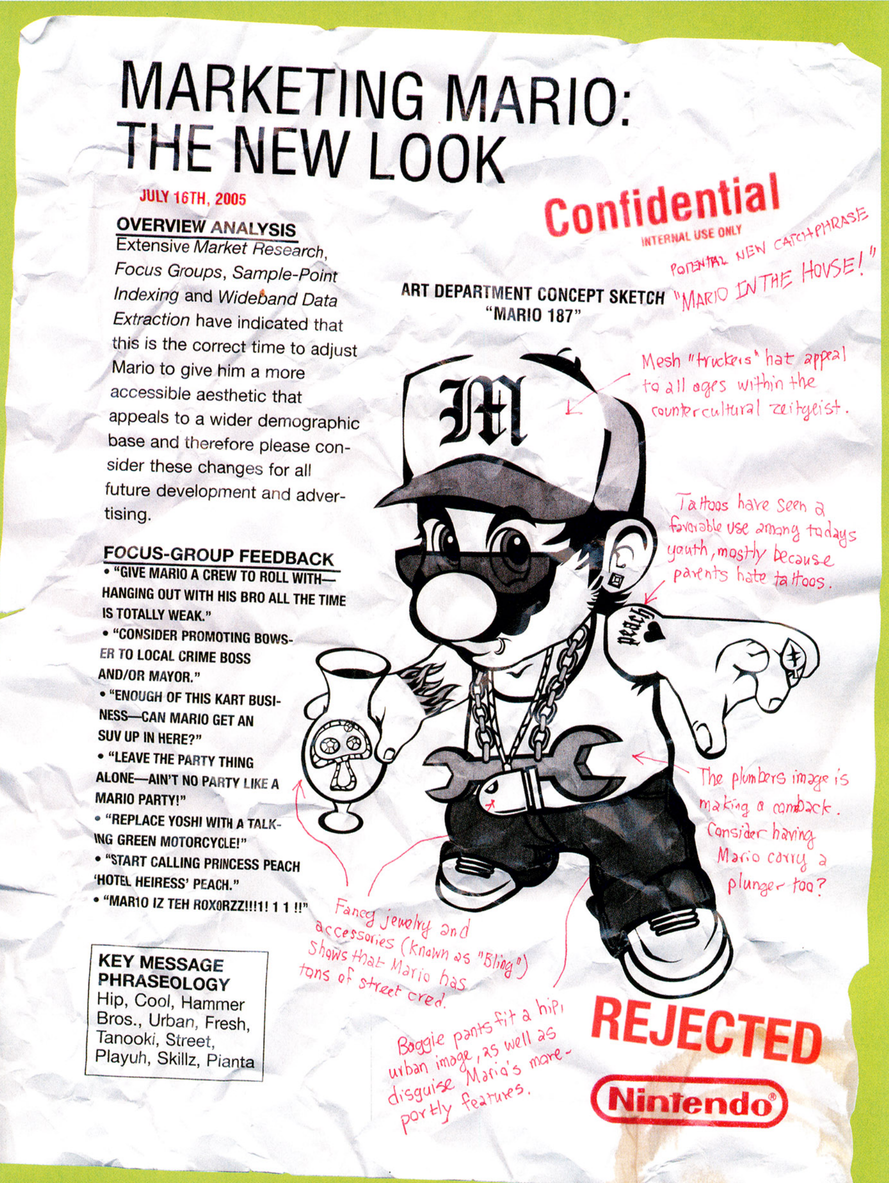
SUPER MARIO MESS AVERTED!

Nintendo Power has discovered a shocking secret! From this evidence we found in a trash bin at Nintendo of America, confidential plans were recently under way to change Mario's image! To our great relief, common sense prevailed, and Nintendo's most-loved character will be keeping his established appearance.



MARKETING MARIO: THE NEW LOOK

JULY 16TH, 2005

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OVERVIEW ANALYSIS

Extensive *Market Research, Focus Groups, Sample-Point Indexing* and *Wideband Data Extraction* have indicated that this is the correct time to adjust Mario to give him a more accessible aesthetic that appeals to a wider demographic base and therefore please consider these changes for all future development and advertising.

FOCUS-GROUP FEEDBACK

- "GIVE MARIO A CREW TO ROLL WITH—HANGING OUT WITH HIS BRO ALL THE TIME IS TOTALLY WEAK."
- "CONSIDER PROMOTING BOWSER TO LOCAL CRIME BOSS AND/OR MAYOR."
- "ENOUGH OF THIS KART BUSINESS—CAN MARIO GET AN SUV UP IN HERE?"
- "LEAVE THE PARTY THING ALONE—AIN'T NO PARTY LIKE A MARIO PARTY!"
- "REPLACE YOSHI WITH A TALKING GREEN MOTORCYCLE!"
- "START CALLING PRINCESS PEACH 'HOTEL HEIRESS' PEACH."
- "MAR1O IZ TEH ROX0RZZ!!!1! 1 1 !!"

KEY MESSAGE PHRASEOLOGY
Hip, Cool, Hammer Bros., Urban, Fresh, Tanooki, Street, Playuh, Skillz, Pianta

ART DEPARTMENT CONCEPT SKETCH
"MARIO 187"

POTENTIAL NEW CATCHPHRASE
"MARIO IN THE HOUSE!"

Mesh "truckers" hat appeal to all ages within the countercultural zeitgeist.

Tattoos have seen a favorable use among todays youth, mostly because parents hate tattoos.

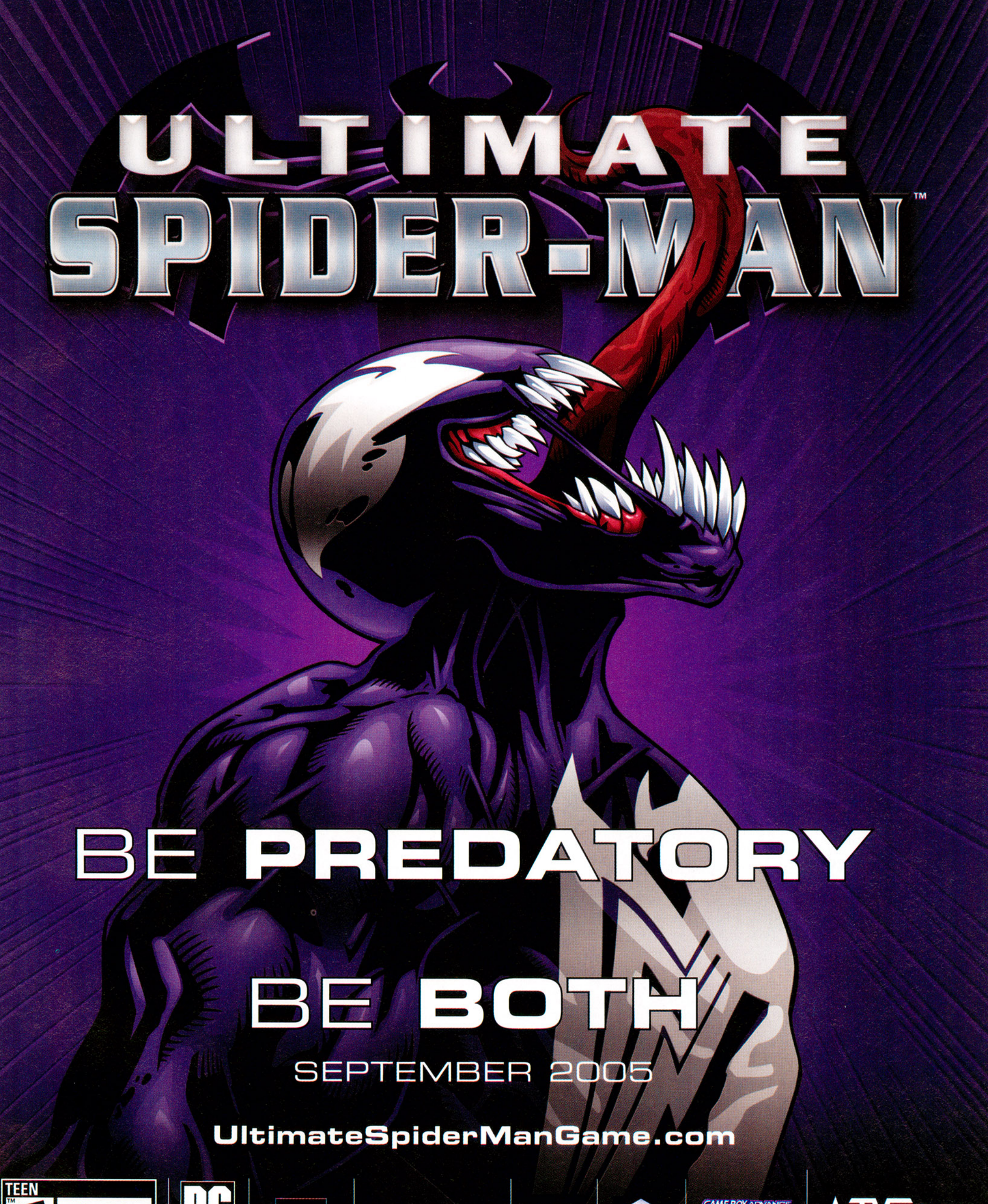
The plumbers image is making a comback. Consider having Mario carry a plunger too?

Fancy jewelry and accessories (known as "Bling") Shows that Mario has tons of street cred.

Baggie pants fit a hip, urban image, as well as disguise Mario's more-portly features.

REJECTED

Nintendo®



TEEN
T
Language
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

PlayStation 2

XBOX

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

GAME BOY ADVANCE

NINTENDO DS

ACTIVISION
activision.com

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MARVEL

Send lawyers, guns and superheroes—this month's previews have something for every gamer.

Battalion Wars: Pg. 28
Phoenix Wright Ace Attorney: Pg. 31
SSX On Tour: Pg. 26
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge: Pg. 30
Ultimate Spider-Man: Pg. 29
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse Pg. 30

Do Ya Think I'm SSXY?

>SSX ON TOUR

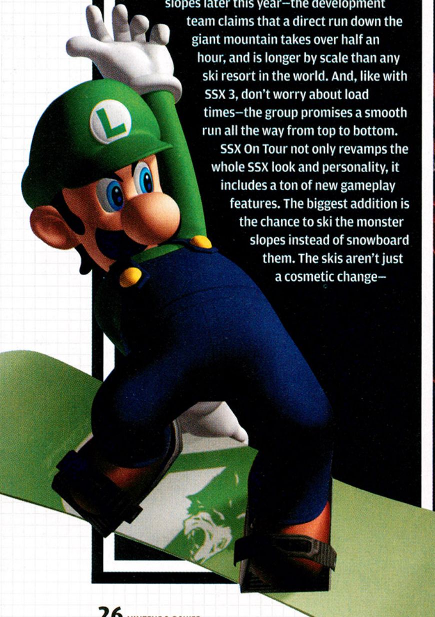
PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER: EA Canada • RELEASE: Fall 2005

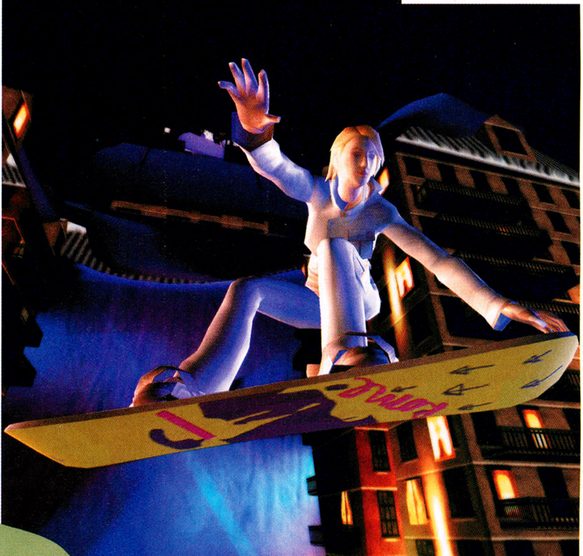
Can we give a quick shout-out to the makers of the SSX series? These guys keep coming up with new ways to entertain. They could have left well enough alone and just made another surreal high-speed racer like SSX Tricky or a relaxed freestyle game like SSX 3, but they've decided to take extreme snow sports in a different direction once again.

In SSX On Tour, attitude is everything—lo-fi, graffiti-style graphics and an '80s hair-band soundtrack create a hard-core, skipping-class, hitchhiking-up-the-slopes feel. The mountain environment has received a facelift, as well—the graphics are more realistic, other riders now populate the once eerily empty hillside, and there are more secret runs to discover than ever before.

Be sure to set aside plenty of time to hit the slopes later this year—the development team claims that a direct run down the giant mountain takes over half an hour, and is longer by scale than any ski resort in the world. And, like with SSX 3, don't worry about load times—the group promises a smooth run all the way from top to bottom.

SSX On Tour not only revamps the whole SSX look and personality, it includes a ton of new gameplay features. The biggest addition is the chance to ski the monster slopes instead of snowboard them. The skis aren't just a cosmetic change—





When you run out of hill, you can trick off hotel roofs.

THE INCREDIBLE HULK
ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION™

Between kidnappings by Bowser, Peach somehow finds time to get in a little skiing.

when you ride them, you'll cut differently, go faster and be able to do ski-specific tricks. And in the redesigned career mode, the challenges and goals differ depending on whether you're hitting the hill with one plank or two.

A fresh cast of characters joins the veteran SSX riders, all of whom can bust moves on either skis or boards, but if you don't want to use a premade rider, a new character creator lets you design the pro boarder you've always wanted to be. To help complete your image, you can fit out your boarder with equipment from sponsors like Line, K2, Foursquare and Westbeach.

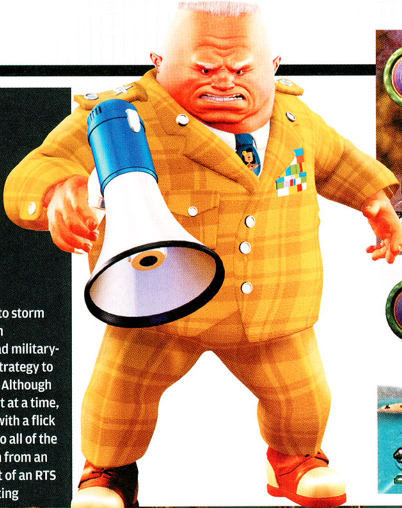
Speaking of characters, the GCN version of SSX On Tour includes a few familiar faces from the Nintendo family, and all of them can pull off unique moves. Tackle half-pipes and monster jumps as snowboarders Mario and Luigi, or race for record times with skier Peach. Further, the ski village at the base of the mountain has been decked out Mario style, and is appropriately dubbed Nintendo Village.

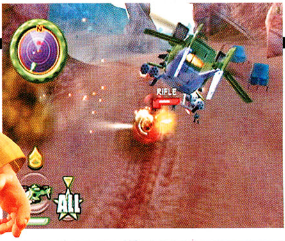
Look for SSX on Tour to hit in time for this year's ski season. —Chris S.

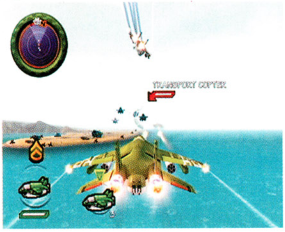
Up with Warfare!

>BATTALION WARS

PLATFORM: **GCN** • PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **KUJU** • RELEASE: **SEPTEMBER 2005**

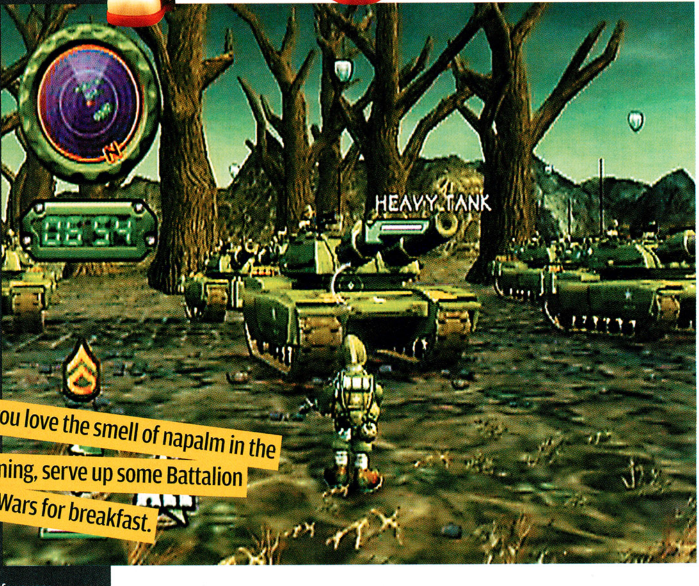






The biggest, brashest war epic to storm the GCN this fall is a tale of two games. In Nintendo's Battalion Wars, straight-ahead military-grunt fighting combines with real-time strategy to create a unique war-gaming experience. Although you are directly in charge of only one unit at a time, you can warp to any unit on your squad with a flick of the C Stick. You can also issue orders to all of the units on your squad, and even view them from an overhead perspective that looks like that of an RTS game. Units range from machine gun-toting soldiers to big, beefy tanks and aircraft. The unit that you are in control of at any given time is slightly more powerful and slightly more durable than other units of the same variety.

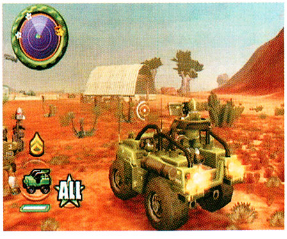
Though Battalion Wars strays from the handheld Advance Wars series in gameplay, it marches to the same beat when it comes to its wacky take on warfare. Cartoonish graphics support a twisted story that starts with a Cold War allegory and turns sharply into a conflict against vampires who are set on world domination. Commentary from broadly drawn characters, such as the upbeat Brigadier Betty and puppetlike dictator Tsar Gorgi, offers humor and motivation. The game was developed by British group Kuju, so its comic sensibilities have a British edge, like the Worms games and war title Cannon Fodder.

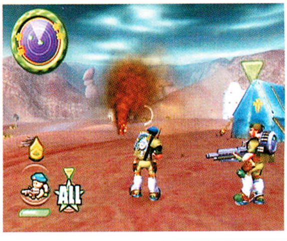


If you love the smell of napalm in the morning, serve up some Battalion Wars for breakfast.

The missions are wild, too. In one you'll infiltrate an enemy base, then transfer control to a four-wheeling recon unit for a race through a mountain pass, and end by using tanks and flame-throwing units to protect your own territory. The game starts with simple land-traversing, enemy-engaging exercises, but the activities become increasingly more complex and strategy-oriented as the game progresses.

In real war, the combatants spend hours on end in foxholes eating canned beans and Spam, but Battalion Wars is meat, potatoes and dessert, all wrapped up into one delicious package.
—GEORGE S.





Good vs. Evil

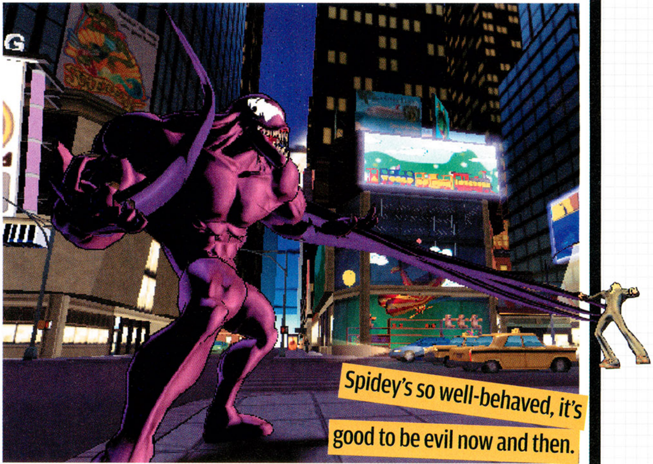
>ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

PLATFORM: GCN, DS • PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: TREYARCH, VICARIOUS VISIONS
RELEASE: FALL 2005

Our recent hands-on time with the GCN and DS versions of Ultimate Spider-Man showed us just how well Activision's Ultimate adaptations mimick their comic counterpart. As revealed in our Vol. 193 preview, Ultimate Spider-Man for GCN takes place in a free-roaming Manhattan, similar to Spider-Man 2. What sets USM apart from previous games is that the game looks and reacts like a comic book to an extent never before achieved in a video game. Activision attributes this partially to the game's unique mixture of cel-shading and 3-D shading, which mirrors the art style employed by the comic's creators (who had a hand in concepting the game). The story is in line with the comic series as well, following Peter Parker and longtime-friend-turned-nemesis Eddie Brock (Venom) as they learn the details of their parents' deaths and fight a common enemy: Trask Industries.

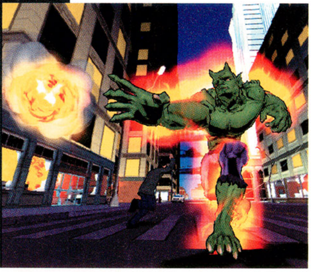
The game switches perspectives between Spider-Man and Venom from level to level. Spider-Man's control is fluid yet sometimes awkward (this is intentional—Peter's still in high school, after all), while Venom has a more brutal, destructive bent, bounding through the city. And whereas Spider-Man must save civilians from disaster, Venom uses his tentacles to grab and suck in bystanders—thus replenishing his health (which drains constantly).

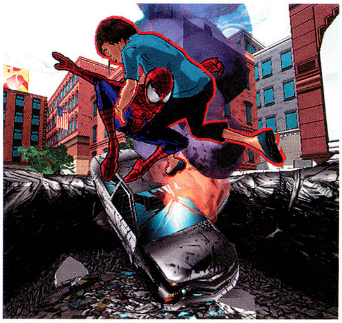
Spidey and Venom aren't the only characters in the game, of course. You'll encounter characters such as Nick Fury, Maxwell Dillon (AKA Electro), plus some from outside the Spidey universe.

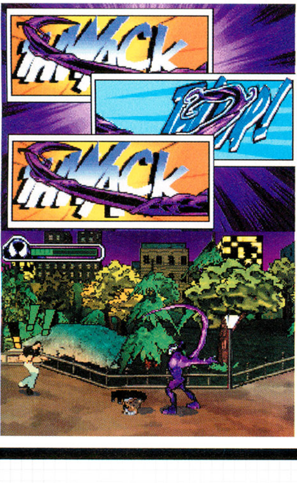


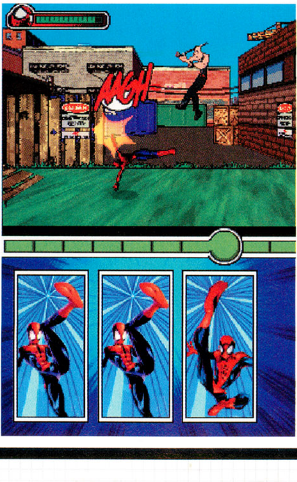
Spidey's so well-behaved, it's good to be evil now and then.

Spidey stays busy chasing Green Goblin and saving civilians, while Venom sucks the life from his innocent victims.









Unlike the previous Spider-Man game for DS, this one is a far cry from its GBA counterpart, which will come out around the same time. The DS version of USM tries something very different from the GCN version, as well. Though the story and voice-overs are nearly identical, the DS game is a side-scroller with 3-D elements (similar to the Viewtiful Joe series). Spidey lives on the top screen and can perform a variety of attack moves that can be combined with his web-swinging acrobatics.

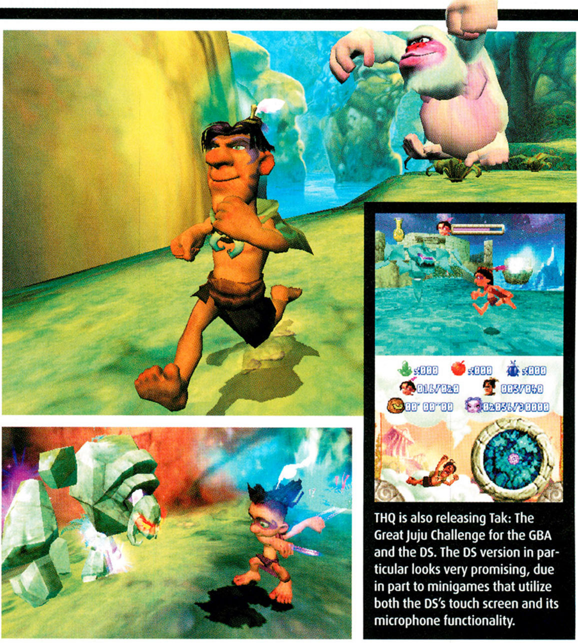
When it comes time to control Venom, however, the gameplay changes dramatically. You'll control the villain on the lower screen, using one hand to move him around and jump, and the other hand (holding the stylus) to maneuver Venom's tentacles. The two move independently, mimicking the disconnect between the Venom suit and its inhabitant—an idea that's depicted in the comics. It's always exciting to see developers incorporating elements that are possible only with the DS hardware. —ANDY M.

Juju a-Go-Go

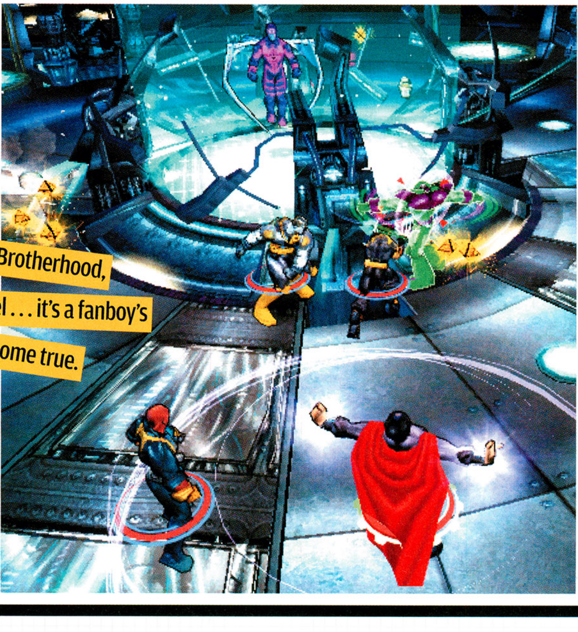
>TAK: THE GREAT JUJU CHALLENGE

PLATFORM: GCN, DS, GBA • PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: AVALANCHE • RELEASE: OCTOBER 2005

Back for round 3, Tak returns to the GCN, along with a familiar cast of friends and enemies. But unlike previous Tak games, The Great Juju Challenge puts a strong emphasis on cooperative play, allowing two people to play through the entire game together as Tak and his good buddy, Lok. One of the game's coolest features is the option for a second player to join or leave the action midgame—gameplay transitions seamlessly. Each character has his own unique skills, which come into play when solving puzzles and fighting enemies. In single-player mode, the character not being controlled will follow the leader, joining in when a group of enemies attacks. In addition to the two-player action, The Great Juju Challenge introduces new animals for Tak to ride, such as rhinos and elephants. There's also a desruction derby mode in which Tak and friends crash around in karts. And as in previous games, a lot of effort has gone into the dialogue and voice acting, with Patrick Warburton (of *Seinfeld* and *The Tick* fame) returning as the voice of Lok.
—ANDY M.



THQ is also releasing Tak: The Great Juju Challenge for the GBA and the DS. The DS version in particular looks very promising, due in part to minigames that utilize both the DS's touch screen and its microphone functionality.



X-men, Brotherhood, Archangel . . . it's a fanboy's dream come true.

Apocalypse Now

>X-MEN LEGENDS II: RISE OF APOCALYPSE

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: RAVEN SOFTWARE • RELEASE: FALL 2005

Activision's sequel to X-Men Legends looked to be shaping up so nicely when we took our first look in Vol. 193, we felt that a follow-up preview was in order. And our recent hands-on time with the game did not disappoint. Gone is the limit on the number of players for certain levels—there are 16 playable X-Men and Brotherhood characters available from the beginning, and every level has optional four-player action. The game itself is much deeper than its predecessor, with an updated leveling-up system, tons more unlockables and randomized item drops. Newly designed menus allow players to switch powers without leaving the action, and the cut-scenes are absolutely stunning. Activision and Raven Software listened closely to X-Men fans when crafting every inch of XLII—one fan request even led to the Angel (who appears in the game as an NPC) becoming Archangel and facing your party in an awesome multilayered boss battle.—ANDY M.

The Wright Stuff

>PHOENIX WRIGHT: ACE ATTORNEY

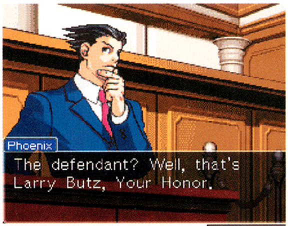
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM • RELEASE: OCTOBER 2005

More often than not, quirky Japanese titles miss North America due to a presumed lack of interest. Lately, however, developers have opted to take a chance on us, as evidenced by the presence of titles such as Nintendo's Electroplankton, Atlus's Trauma Center: Under The Knife and Bandai's Chibi Robo at this year's E3. Capcom will follow suit with Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney, a remake of the Japan-only GBA game Gyakuten Saiban. PWAA serves as a great introduction to the series (which is currently on its third installment in Japan). The game comes to life in new ways on the DS—it's one of the few titles that can be played exclusively with the stylus. Producer Minae Matsukawa and the rest of the creative team felt that the DS would be the best platform for a game of this nature, and after a good amount of hands-on time, we couldn't agree more. Using the stylus and dual screens to interrogate witnesses, examine evidence and investigate crime scenes is a perfect move for the series. The game advances fluidly, and stylus control becomes second nature in no time.

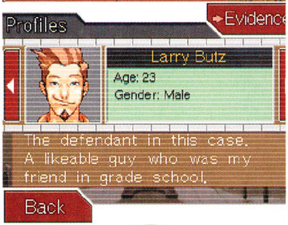
Though most of the action takes place in the courtroom, don't expect an unexciting dialog-heavy drama. The beauty of PWAA is that it doesn't pretend to be grounded in reality. Rules are ignored for the sake of fun, and once you're engulfed in Phoenix's bizarre world, you won't object. The story and art style take front seats as you follow rookie attorney Phoenix Wright through his first five cases, usually defending someone who's been falsely accused of a grisly crime. Each case is related cleverly through an overarching story that involves Wright's personal life. One case even has Phoenix defending himself against a murder charge. Cases move along at a good clip, and every scenario is overemphasized with anime-influenced characters and movement. (Matsukawa cited the popular anime *Garasu no Kamen [Glass Mask]* as an influence on the game's outlandish style.)

Although PWAA is receiving much-deserved hype stateside, Capcom is still testing the waters. "Even though it's a unique game, we believe Phoenix Wright has universal appeal," says Matsukawa. "We need to release [it] first, and see how it goes." Here's hoping it's just the beginning.

—ANDY M.



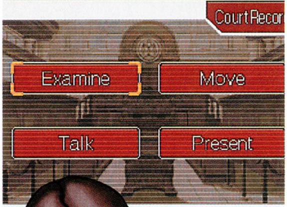
Phoenix
The defendant? Well, that's Larry Butz, Your Honor.

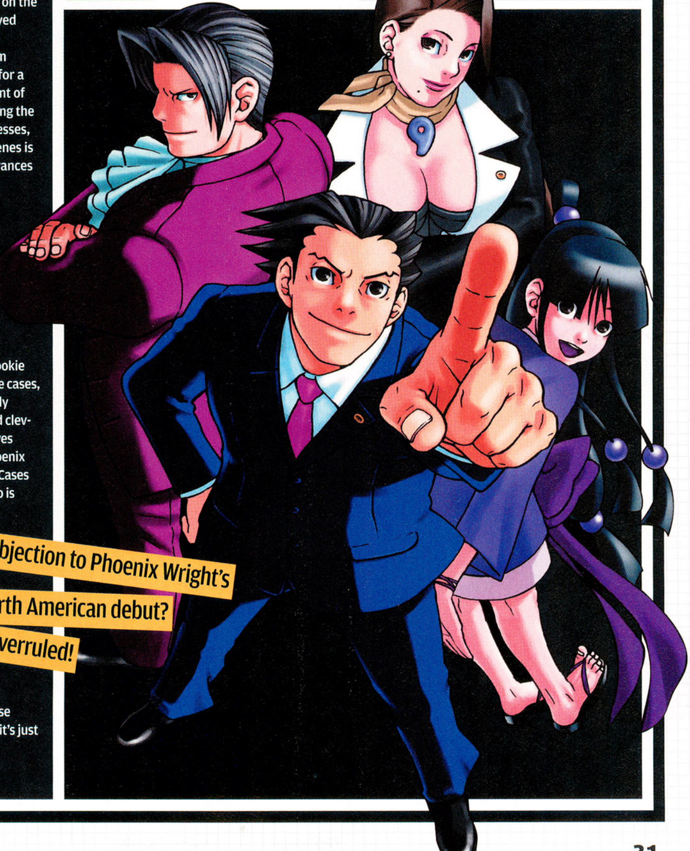


Profiles

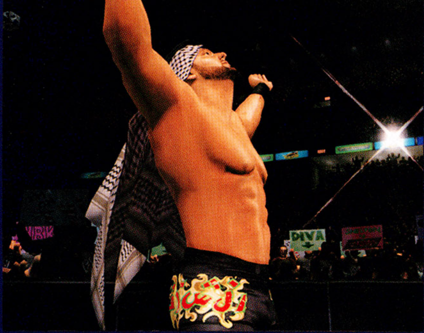
Larry Butz
Age: 23
Gender: Male

The defendant in this case. A likeable guy who was my friend in grade school.

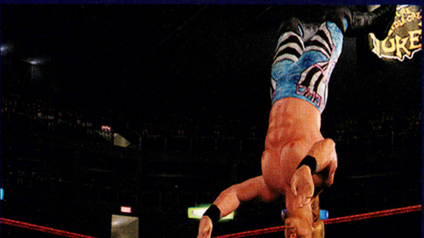




Objection to Phoenix Wright's North American debut? Overruled!



RUCK FULES!
SMACKDOWN
WORD
12



TEEN

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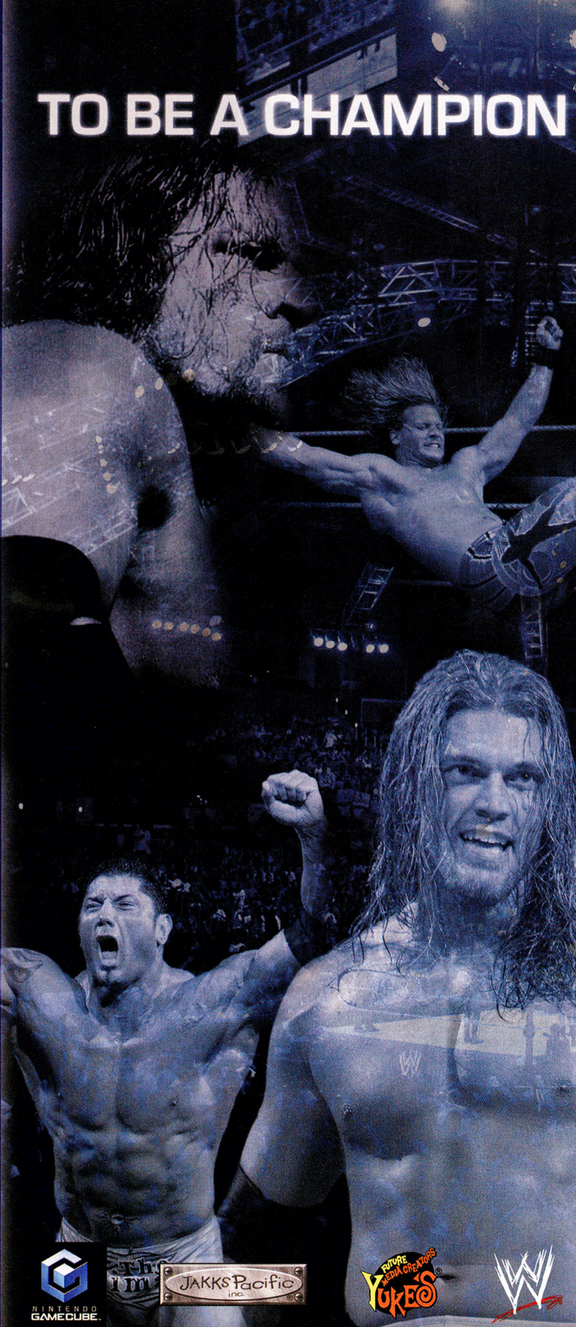
CONTENT RATED BY

ESRB

Blood
Language
Sexual Themes
Violence



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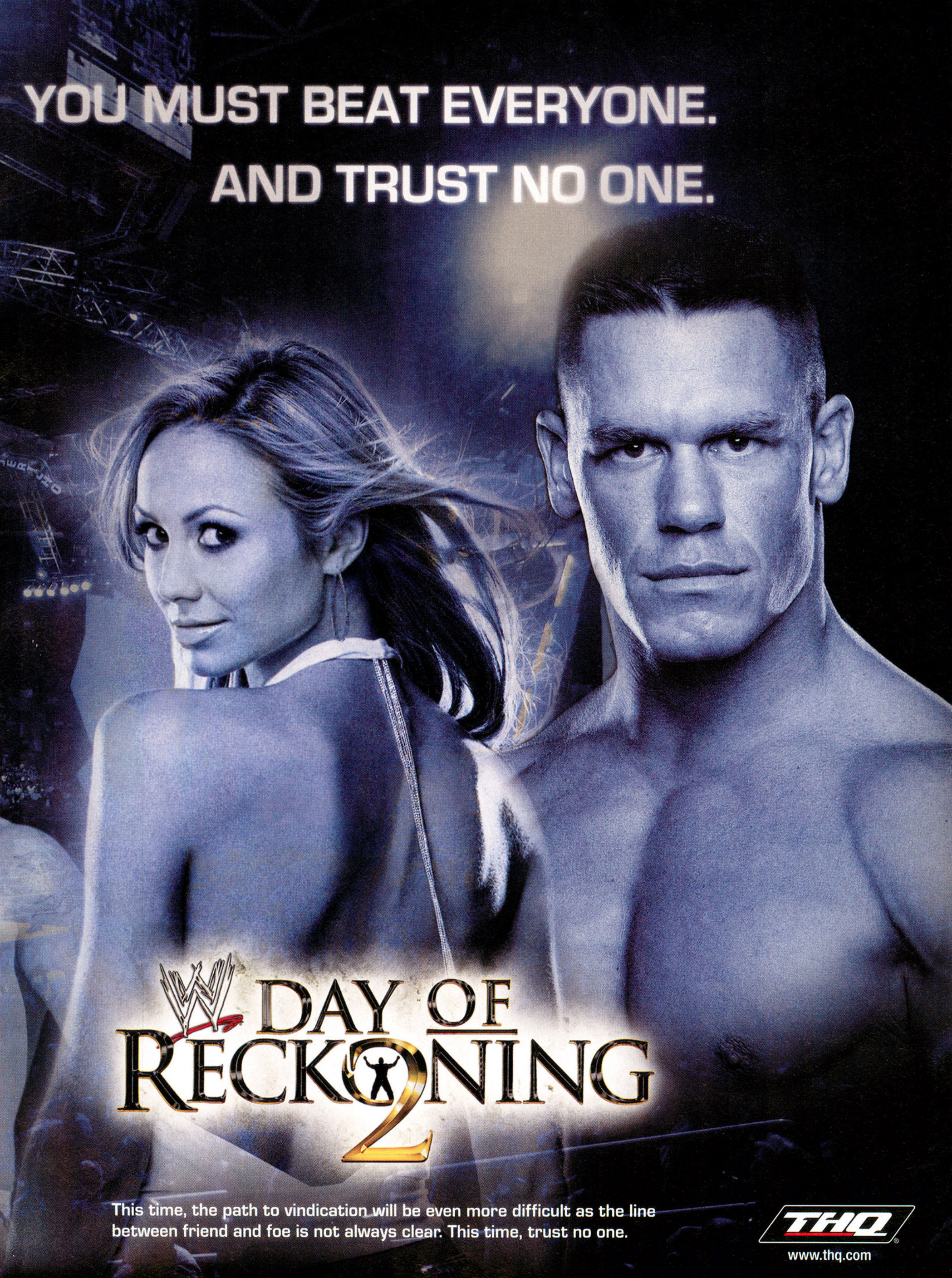
YOU MUST BEAT EVERYONE.
AND TRUST NO ONE.
DAY OF RECKONING 2
THQ
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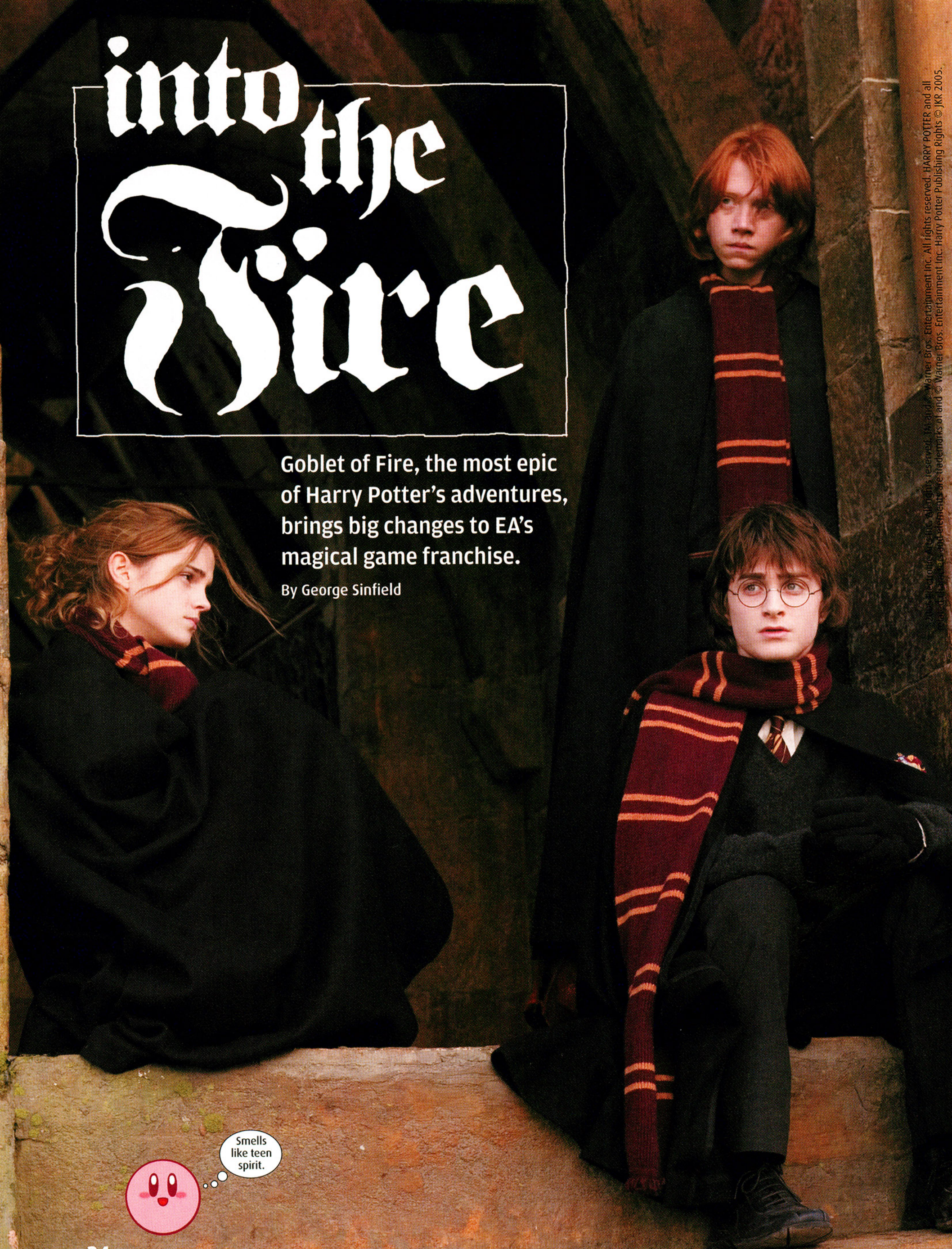
This time, the path to vindication will be even more difficult as the line between friend and foe is not always clear. This time, trust no one.

into the Fire

Goblet of Fire, the most epic of Harry Potter's adventures, brings big changes to EA's magical game franchise.

By George Sinfield


Smells like teen spirit.

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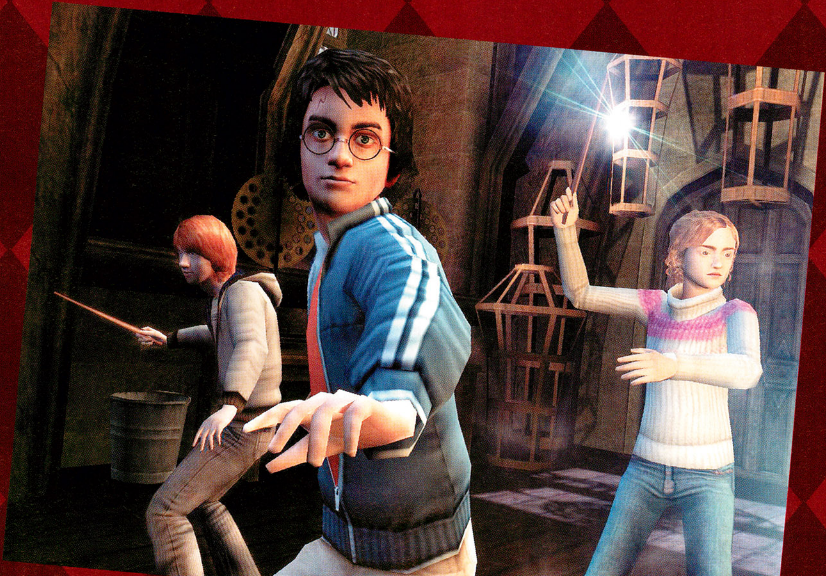
Harry Potter is going through growing pains in the middle story of J.K. Rowling's seven-part series. EA's vision of the conflicted magician is maturing rapidly, too. Whereas lock-and-key puzzles in the bowels of Hogwarts sufficed in the first three GCN book adaptations, Goblet of Fire expands the scope of the wizarding world, increases Harry's magical repertoire and underlines the hero's need for help from his friends, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. We traveled to England to get an exclusive look at the game in development, months before its November release.



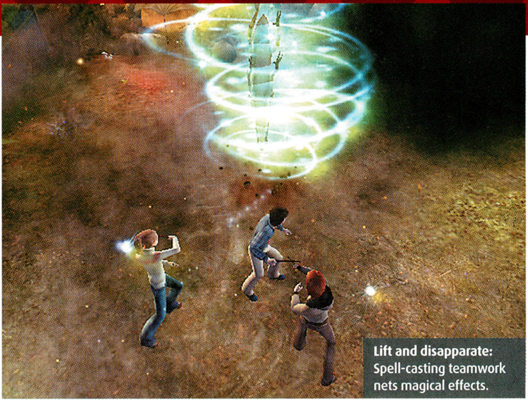
Celluloid Sorcery

The game's evolution past previous Harry Potter titles is immediately noticeable in its use of film assets and actors' likenesses. Out are the book-illustration-inspired images of Harry, Ron and Hermione. In are renderings of Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint and Emma Watson as they appear in the upcoming movie. "The faces, the hairstyles and the clothing are all very carefully matched to the actors," explains Alex Laurant, senior art director. "We've synchronized as closely as we can with [film studio] Warner Bros. to make sure all of those details are reflected in the game."

Somber overtones in the story (the introduction of the Dark Mark and the Death Eaters and a toe-to-toe battle with Voldemort), made it all the more important for the developers to graduate to a more-serious look. Laurant describes the visuals as "directly inspired by movie techniques and specifically the moodiness of the film. We intend for the look and feel of the game to grow up along with the kids, along with the franchise and having access to the production really helps." Continues Laurant, "There's a healthy back and forth of imagery, allowing [the filmmakers] to see what we're working on and for us to see things in their preproduction process, too. We've also had set visits and discussions about how key characters behave and what the rules of the world are. All of that goes into the hopper."

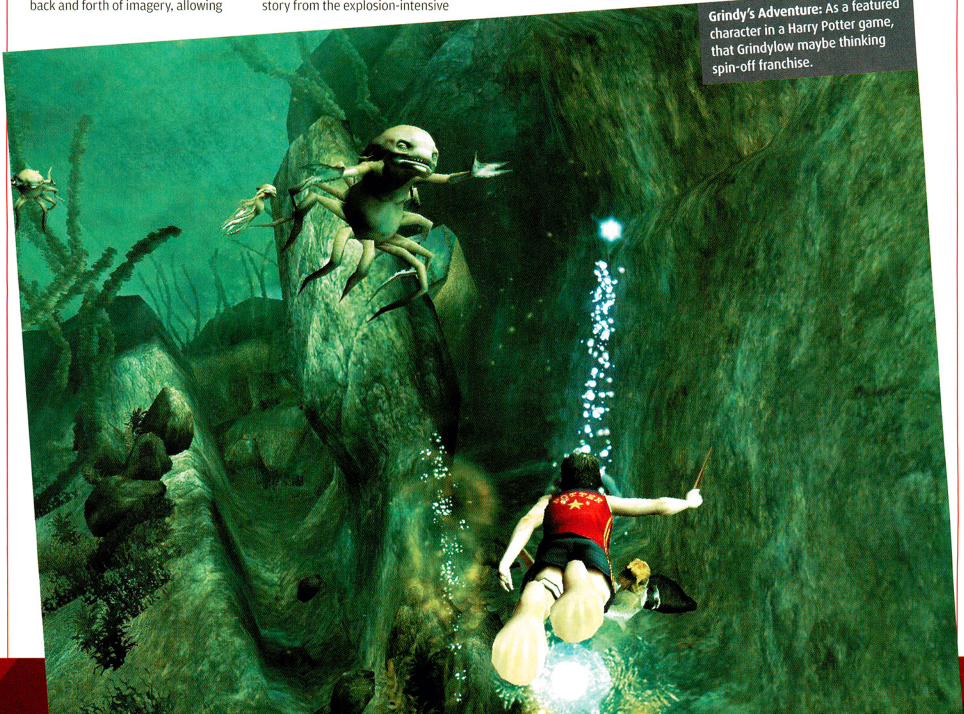
A large part of the art's tone comes from the way Laurant's team treats lighting. "Games have not traditionally shown pools of light, areas that go to complete darkness and really dark shadows," says the art director. "The tendency in most computer and console games has been to overlight the world in making everything extremely explicit for the player, so you see everything all the time. That may have a practical use, but it doesn't give us much of a palette to work with. With this game, what I've been pushing is really how dark and how moody those shadows can get."

The result is a cinematic look that will carry the emotional power of the story from the explosion-intensive



Lift and disapparate: Spell-casting teamwork nets magical effects.

> **"What I've been pushing is really how dark and moody those shadows can get."**
>
> **—Alex Laurant**



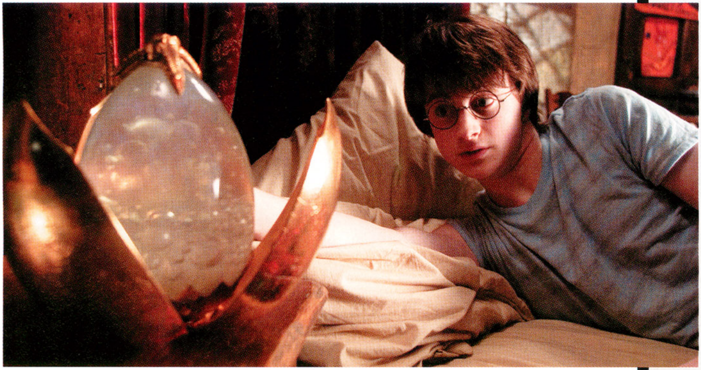
Grindy's Adventure: As a featured character in a Harry Potter game, that Grindylow maybe thinking spin-off franchise.

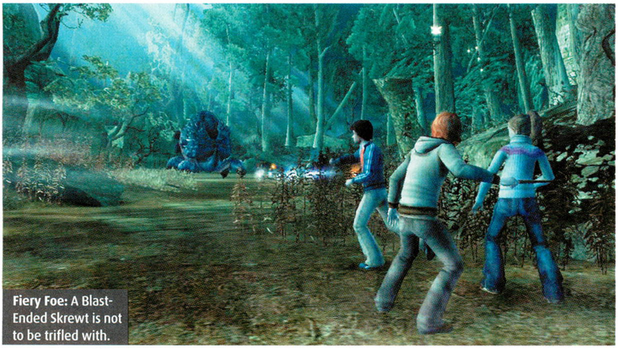
attack on the Quidditch World Cup campsite (what producer Justin Manning calls their "Omaha Beach level") through Harry's trials in the Triwizard Tournament.

Three Is the Magic Number

"We're a highly researched product", says producer Manning. "Not only in terms of focus testing throughout development, but each year we do a lot of research with the audience and they tell us what they want from the games. There was certainly a drive towards a multiplayer game. [Gamers] want to play with their friends. They want to play with their older siblings. They want to play with their parents. Having that option really appeals to the core of the Harry Potter fan base." And EA has delivered. The bulk of the game's 11 repeatable levels accommodate three players who can each drop in for any duration, and drop out without interrupting the flow of gameplay for the rest of the participants. Alternately, a single gamer or a pair can play through the multiplayer levels with AI-controlled characters filling out the trio. If players wish for non-player characters to come to their aid, they can call them with the tap of a button. Along with cooperative elements that have players dispatching enemies together using combinations of magic spells, there are ongoing competitions for collectibles, such as Triwizard shields, which unlock levels and collectible cards.

The three events of the Triwizard Tournament, though, are designed specifically for a single player. Initially, the game designers were looking at ways to make the Triwizard events multiplayer-friendly: "It was a tough decision for us [to go with a single player]," explains Manning. "But they're Harry's big hero moments and the blockbuster moments of the film. It would be foolish for us to detract from that. They're really engaging roller-coaster rides and we want them to be a distinct piece of gameplay." The first event has Harry on his broom being chased by the nasty Hungarian Horntail Dragon around the Hogwarts grounds. The second event challenges Harry





Fiery Foe: A Blast-Ended Skrewt is not to be trifled with.

ON-SET REPORT

Magical Mystery Tour

Our fact-finding tour began on the *Goblet of Fire* film set, northeast of London.

On the 150-acre Leavesden Studios grounds, just down the road from Privet Drive (overgrown and abandoned, as it was not used for the *Goblet of Fire* film), lies a warehouse that holds a Harry Potter fan's dream collection—everything from pieces of the Whomping Willow to cars from the Hogwarts Express. "We don't let a single thing go, just in case they put it back into a film," explains onset PR representative Alex Sayer. "You never know what J.K. Rowling is going to write back into the books." Permanent sets are arranged in a twisted configuration that rivals the complexity of the hedge maze in *Goblet of Fire*'s third Triwizard challenge. As you step through one plywood frame, you'll find yourself in the library. Turn the corner, and you'll drop into the Great Hall, the largest of the studio's interiors, decked out in stone work that was inspired by that of Oxford University. The magical ceiling is a green screen that the filmmakers use to add effects in post production.

Each location drips in detail. The Gryffindor Common Room is littered with notices about Quidditch practice. A comic book outlining the adventures of Martin Miggs, Mad Muggle, lies on a table. Books in Dumbledore's study bear magical names on their bindings. Portraits of headmasters and headmistresses show their subjects asleep during night scenes. In daytime scenes, they're awake. Some portraits depict members of the crew, and other crew members have their names carved into gravestones in the cemetery.

Every scene from the film was created within the studio's confines. Even shots of the school exteriors, which look like they're shot at a castle's grounds, are accomplished through the use of facades and models. "We've had journalists ask where they can go to find Hogwarts," says Sayer, "and our answer is: 'This is it!'"

to swim deep into the Black Lake, avoiding Grindylows and other critters, in an effort to save Ron.

Since Harry is the series's lead character (not to mention the most famous 14-year-old magician in the world), and Hermione is the lead female character, it's obvious why players would select them, but who would choose to control second banana Ron? Manning comes to his defense: "Without Ron, it would be a much less colorful game. You can always add humor with Ron. They all have their own elements that people can relate to. Ron is the comic relief, Hermione is the intelligent one and Harry is the hero."

Hogwarts Revisited

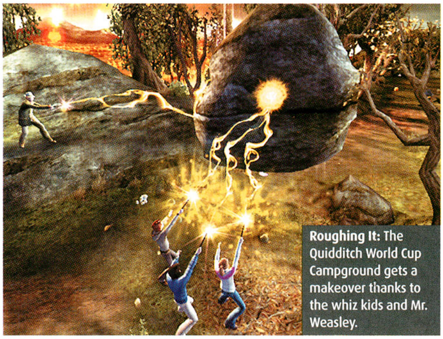
Along with the option to pick characters comes an open-ended game structure. Certain events must follow others to tell a cohesive story, but players can return to levels in which those events took place and play through them again, free of the story elements, just to fight enemies and collect hidden items. "Your experience of going through a level that second or third time is definitely going to be a different one," promises Laurant. "You will have a unique path in some cases. Other times, you'll have the same path, but different encounters."

The designers use camera movement and environmental elements to influence the route that players take in each pass through a level. "We always want to give the player choices to do whatever they want," shares executive producer Harvey Elliot. But we also like to give them our preferences; because that's the way we can tune a great game experience. We can gently lure the kids in certain directions by subtly changing the texture on the ground, which means that we can set up more surprises. There are a lot of really cool things that we're doing just to scare children."

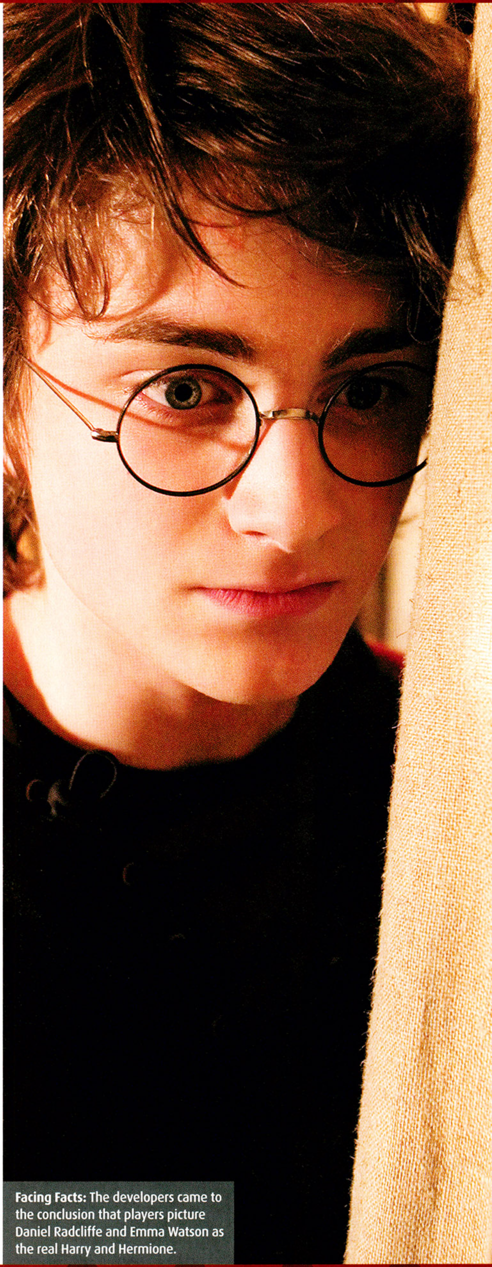
Spellbound

Three types of magic (charms, jinxes and the Accio spell) encompass more than a dozen spells. Charms, such as the water-emitting Aqua Eructo and the object-lifting Wingardium Leviosa, are cast through magical beams. As Manning puts it, "They're the sort of spells that will lift or throw or catapult or pull, grow, spray, extinguish items in the world. We directly connect the player to the world with streams of magic. It's got a kind of

> **"There are a lot of really cool things that we're doing just to scare children."**
>
> **—Harvey Elliot**



Roughing It: The Quidditch World Cup Campground gets a makeover thanks to the whiz kids and Mr. Weasley.



Facing Facts: The developers came to the conclusion that players picture Daniel Radcliffe and Emma Watson as the real Harry and Hermione.

tactile element. If I come up to a huge rock that I can't lift with my own magic, there's this kind of push-pull thing as I try to wrestle with the rock. If friends join in, they'll add their magical force and help lift the rock into the air as we combine our magic."

Manning describes jinxes as "magical bullets," bursts of light that have an instantaneous effect on the target. Inflatus, for instance, fills an enemy with air as if it were a balloon. Orbis spins a creature and drives it into the ground. Pullus turns the target into a chicken. When players team up to use charms in concert with jinxes, they can trigger one of four effects per jinx, depending on the combination of spells used. If one player lifts an enemy using Wingardium Leviosa, for example, and another player hits the suspended creature with Avifors, it will turn into a flock of birds. If the creature were bound to the ground, the result would be something entirely different.

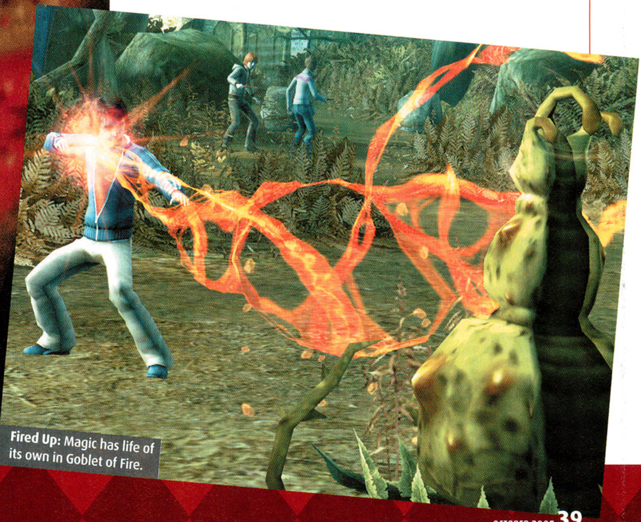
The Accio spell is in a category all by itself. In J.K. Rowling's story, Harry uses the summoning spell at the beginning of the initial Triwizard event to call his broom so that he can distract the dragon by flying around the arena, then collect the golden egg. In the game, Accio is used to summon any number of things. Manning says, "We use it for reward collection. When you go around the world pinging items to get beans, they'll try to run away from you because they're magical. You'll use Accio to bring them to you."

Laurant believes that the team's artistic treatment of all of the game's spells will ground players in the magical world. "This is kinetic magic. The spells have a physical form and feel alive. When the player casts magic, we want to use every trick we have to make that player feel connected to the environment. If you cast a spell and cause an eruption of light in a certain area, you're going to see leaves kick up on the ground. You're going to see them shake in the trees. It's going to have a visible impact."

Magic is also tied to the Wizard Cards that players have been able to collect since the first Harry Potter game. Now the cards have an impact on gameplay. Each character is allowed to bring three cards into a level. Some are character-specific boosts—a card might increase only Harry's magical power, for example. Other cards pump up every character's abilities to fight a particular type of creature. The cards are hidden within the game's levels and some may not be available until the second or third run through an area; yet another enticement to keep playing after the story elements are resolved.

Come Together

To make a two-hour film into a 12-15-hour gaming experience, the developers looked at every opportunity in the story to create gameplay, and consulted with author Rowling to develop what they call "lateral fiction." For instance, in the book and film, Harry submerges the egg that he collected from the first Triwizard

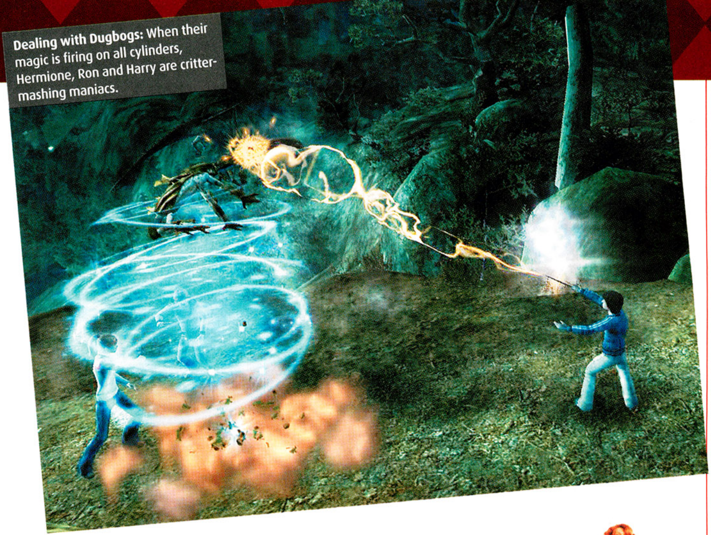


Fired Up: Magic has life of its own in Goblet of Fire.

event in the prefects' bathroom to listen to a mermaid's song and learn the nature of the second event. It's a short scene in the film, but in the game's fifth level it turns into a half-hour-long search for the egg within the school's pipes and boiler rooms after Harry loses his grip. Early in the design phase, the developers attempted to make the Yule Ball into a game level as well, experimenting with dancing game mechanics, but it was scrapped because it wasn't consistent with the rest of the gameplay.

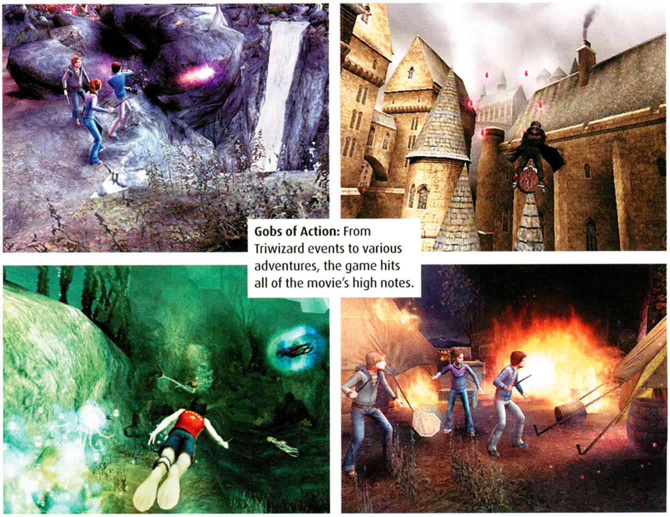
Because Rowling has created such rich fiction, many parts of which are just touched upon in the books, the developers have plenty of room to create, and still stay in step with the source material. "Everything in our game, every spell, every creature, every encounter is something that fits inside the Harry Potter world," proclaims Elliott. "We've found that there's a lot of opportunity to keep pushing and keep developing in these areas. It feels like we're sending the players on a real journey this year. It shows how Harry is becoming much more powerful as a wizard, how Hermione and Ron are really fighting alongside him and supporting him. That kind of powering up and leading to a really strong confrontation with Voldemort has great buildup to it."

The overall vision is still coming into focus, even as some elements are being finalized in preparation for the game's November release on the GCN, GBA and DS. "We're still coming up with cool ideas we want to build in," says Elliott. "The way we've developed the schedule is to give the team time to go off and experiment and discover things [late in the process]. It means the experience constantly evolves instead of the more old-fashioned model where we'd say 'OK, we've got three months preproduction, approve everything, done. This is the game.' We continue to [tweak] the direction, the artistic look and feel and the things that are really going to make the game fun. Preproduction continues probably until we get to Alpha, and as long as QA doesn't read this, probably slightly after that as well," he jokes. When asked if the open-ended nature of the game and the development team's late additions make the game's testers pull their hair out, Elliot admits, "Probably. But, they'll also have fun doing it, so that's OK."



Dealing with Dugbogs: When their magic is firing on all cylinders, Hermione, Ron and Harry are critter-mashing maniacs.

> **"Every spell, every creature, every encounter is something that fits inside the Harry Potter world."**
>
> **—Harvey Elliot**



Gobs of Action: From Triwizard events to various adventures, the game hits all of the movie's high notes.

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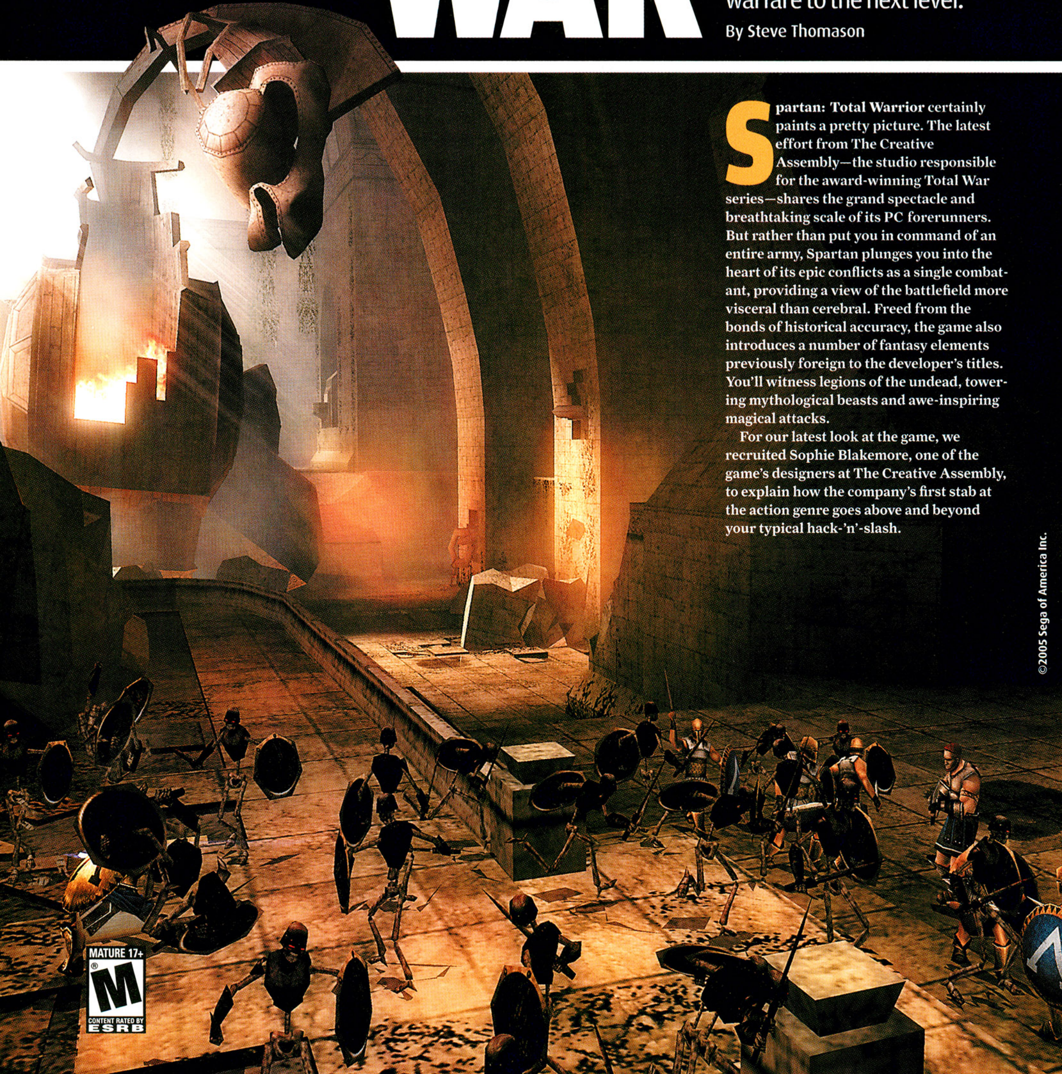
THE ART OF WAR

Sega teams with The Creative Assembly to take ancient warfare to the next level.

By Steve Thomason



Spartan: Total Warrior certainly paints a pretty picture. The latest effort from The Creative Assembly—the studio responsible for the award-winning Total War series—shares the grand spectacle and breathtaking scale of its PC forerunners. But rather than put you in command of an entire army, Spartan plunges you into the heart of its epic conflicts as a single combatant, providing a view of the battlefield more visceral than cerebral. Freed from the bonds of historical accuracy, the game also introduces a number of fantasy elements previously foreign to the developer's titles. You'll witness legions of the undead, towering mythological beasts and awe-inspiring magical attacks.

For our latest look at the game, we recruited Sophie Blakemore, one of the game's designers at The Creative Assembly, to explain how the company's first stab at the action genre goes above and beyond your typical hack-'n'-slash.

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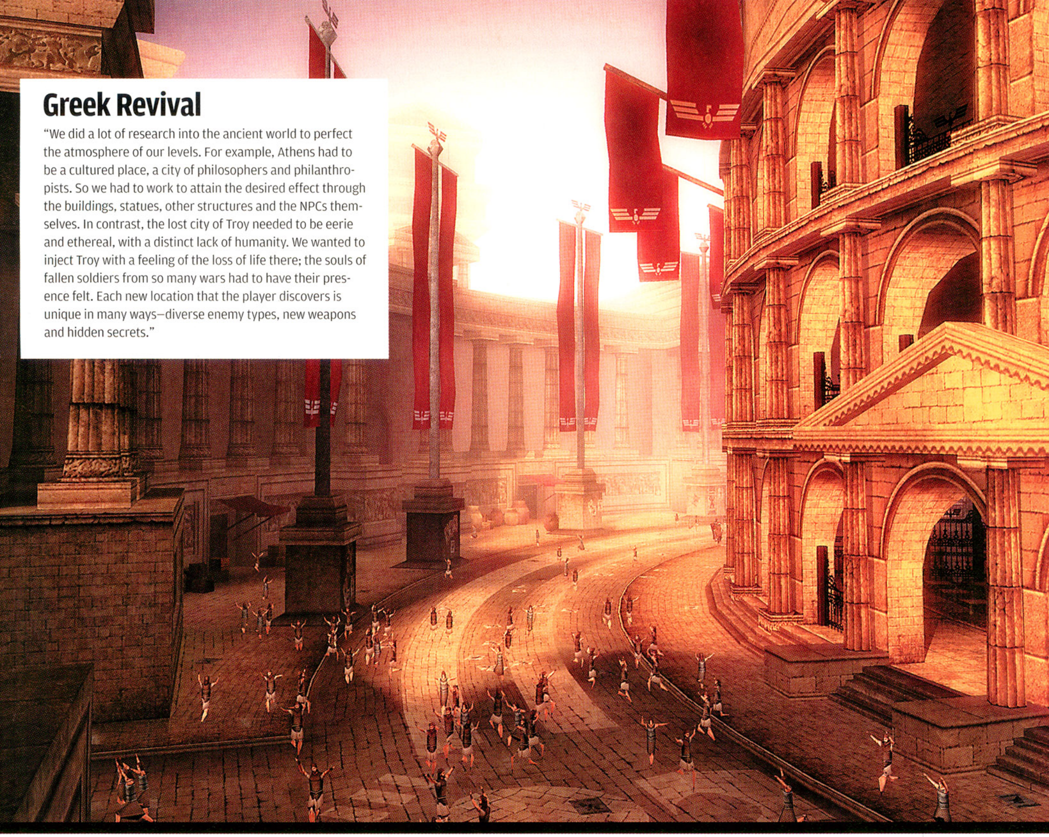
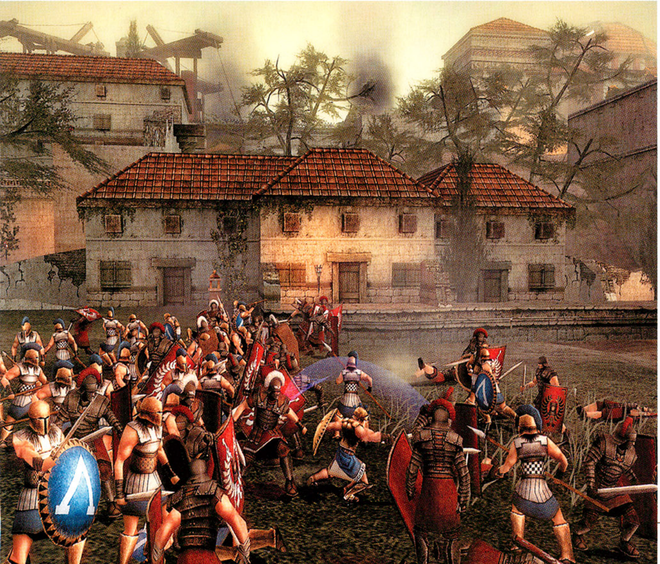


Greek Revival

"We did a lot of research into the ancient world to perfect the atmosphere of our levels. For example, Athens had to be a cultured place, a city of philosophers and philanthropists. So we had to work to attain the desired effect through the buildings, statues, other structures and the NPCs themselves. In contrast, the lost city of Troy needed to be eerie and ethereal, with a distinct lack of humanity. We wanted to inject Troy with a feeling of the loss of life there; the souls of fallen soldiers from so many wars had to have their presence felt. Each new location that the player discovers is unique in many ways—diverse enemy types, new weapons and hidden secrets."

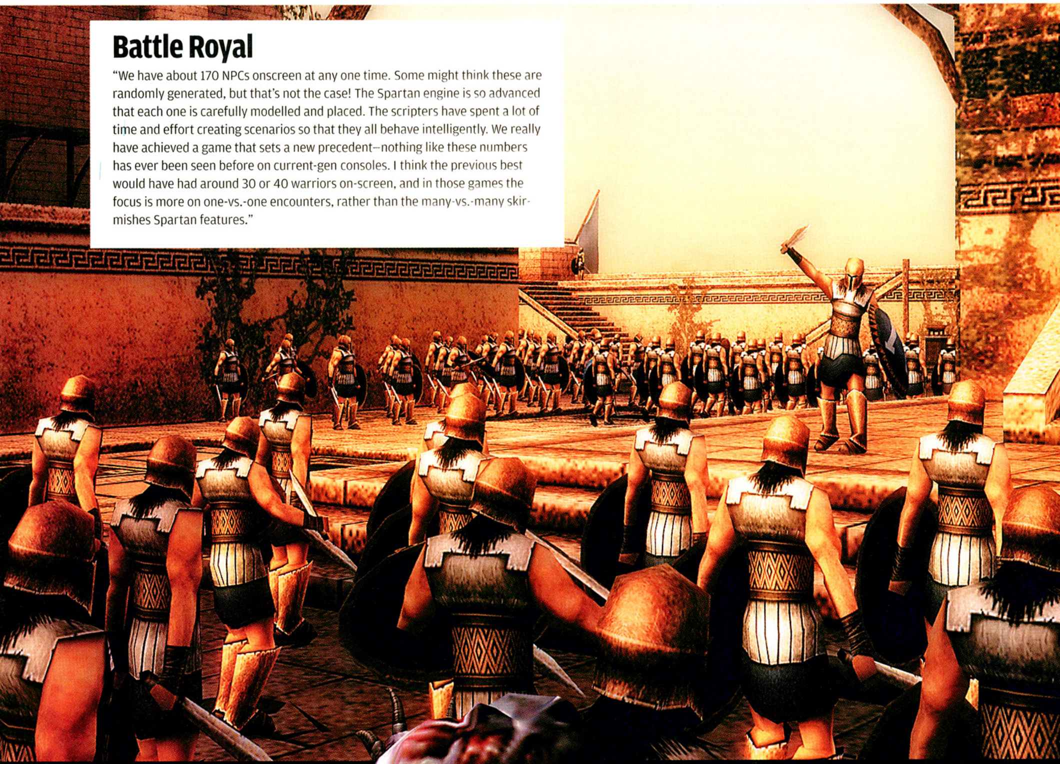


Way of the Warriors

"The AI in Spartan is very advanced. We have over 60 diverse types of opponents, each with their own tactics, weapons and strategy. Barbarians tend to be fanatical, launching banzai charges without a thought for themselves. This is in direct contrast to the Romans, who are more orderly, staying in ranks and attacking in numbers. Your allies are also advanced, taking positions where they're needed, attacking the more powerful enemies in force, etc. To some extent, you can even hang back a little, and let the battle take shape before your eyes. The enemy AI will notice this after a while, though, think you're a wuss and come charging towards you!"

Battle Royal

"We have about 170 NPCs onscreen at any one time. Some might think these are randomly generated, but that's not the case! The Spartan engine is so advanced that each one is carefully modelled and placed. The scripters have spent a lot of time and effort creating scenarios so that they all behave intelligently. We really have achieved a game that sets a new precedent—nothing like these numbers has ever been seen before on current-gen consoles. I think the previous best would have had around 30 or 40 warriors on-screen, and in those games the focus is more on one-vs.-one encounters, rather than the many-vs.-many skirmishes Spartan features."



Custom-Built Carnage

"We worked on the engine from scratch in order to achieve the very best and get the unique, epic gameplay experience we have. Each version (GCN, PS2 and Xbox) was worked on individually—the game is not ported—so that every console will have the optimum code, button settings, UI [user interface], etc. This meant we could really fiddle with the engine to get to the point where it can handle the hundreds of NPCs onscreen at once. We wouldn't have been able to achieve the huge scale of the game if we'd based the engine on anything that had been used before. Everything you see in the game can be reached and investigated. That's pretty impressive when you realize we have an extensive draw distance with no pop-up or fogging. We're really proud of our engine, which has allowed us to be so technically advanced."

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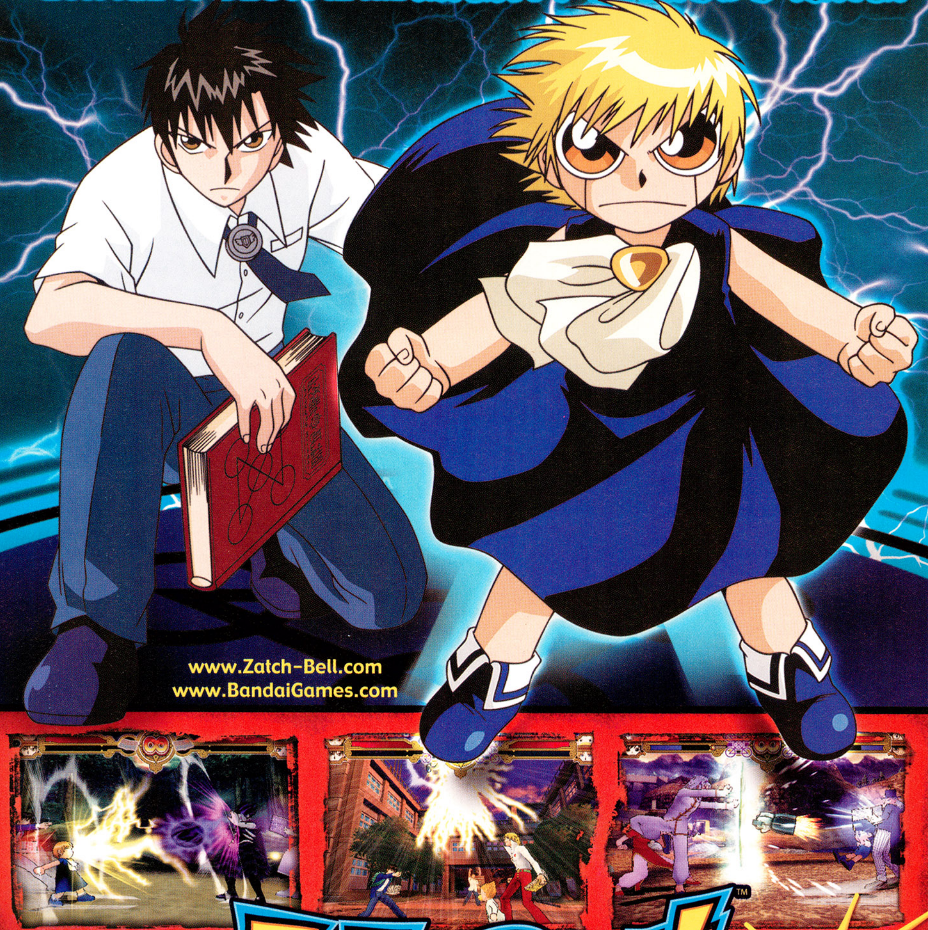

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NP TOP 200

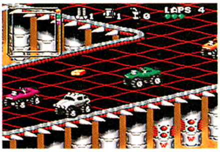
Leading up to our 200th issue, we're counting down our top games of all time.

By Pete Michaud

	Game Name	System	Release Date
200	Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life	GCN	2005
199	Cubivore	GCN	2002
198	Rush 'n Attack	NES	1987
197	Pac-Man Vs.	GCN	2003
196	Super Baseball Simulator 1.000	SNES	1991
195	Zombies Ate My Neighbors	SNES	1993
194	Maniac Mansion	NES	1990
193	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: The Manhattan Project	NES	1992
192	Gyromite	NES	1985
191	The Legend of the Mystical Ninja	SNES	1992
190	Secret of Evermore	SNES	1995
189	Pokémon Trading Card Game	GBC	2000
188	Out of This World	SNES	1992
187	Mortal Kombat	SNES	1993
186	Illusion of Gaia	SNES	1994
185	Mortal Kombat II	SNES	1994
184	Wario Land	Virtual Boy	1995
183	Gradius III	NES	1991
182	Lufia II: Rise of the Sinistrals	SNES	1996
181	WarioWare, Inc.: Mega Party Game$	GCN	2004

#177
ROCK N' ROLL RACING

Before there was Diablo or Warcraft, a company by the name of Blizzard was making a name for itself with finely crafted games such as this. Think R.C. Pro-Am with a '70s rock soundtrack.



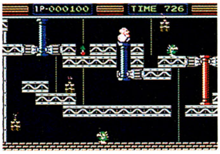
#166
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

This popular 3-D isometric-view game was important for the GBA; it proved to the masses that the little handheld that could knew how to get sweet air.

SCORE
9650
0:25
SPECIAL
HEELFLIP
100

#192
GYROMITE

Bundled with the very first NES, (before the term "bundled" even existed) the game pushed R.O.B. to his . . . er, *its* maximum potential.



#185
MORTAL KOMBAT II

The first MK on the Super NES received a lot of flack for not including arcade "finishers;" the sequel more than made up for it.

	Game Name	System	Release Date
180	Ogre Battle: The March of the Black Queen	SNES	1995
179	Mario Bros.	NES	1986
178	X-Men Legends	GCN	2004
177	Rock N' Roll Racing	SNES	1993
176	Dragon Warrior III	NES	1992
175	Spider-Man 2	GCN	2004
174	Metroid Prime 2 Echoes	GCN	2004
173	Mario Kart: Super Circuit	GBA	2001
172	Pro Wrestling	NES	1987
171	Breath of Fire II	SNES	1995
170	*Star Wars*: Rogue Squadron	N64	1998
169	Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble	GBC	2001
168	The Simpsons Road Rage	GCN	2001
167	Mario Tennis	GBC	2001
166	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	GBA	2001
165	TimeSplitters 2	GCN	2002
164	The Lost Vikings	SNES	1993
163	SimCity	SNES	1991
162	Mario Paint	SNES	1992
161	Breath of Fire	SNES	1994

5 Worst Games Ever

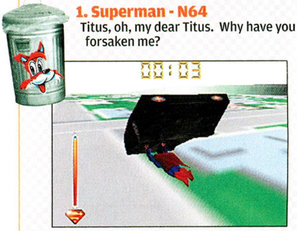
5. Charlie's Angels - GCN
A game based on a movie based on a TV show—we all know how this one ends.

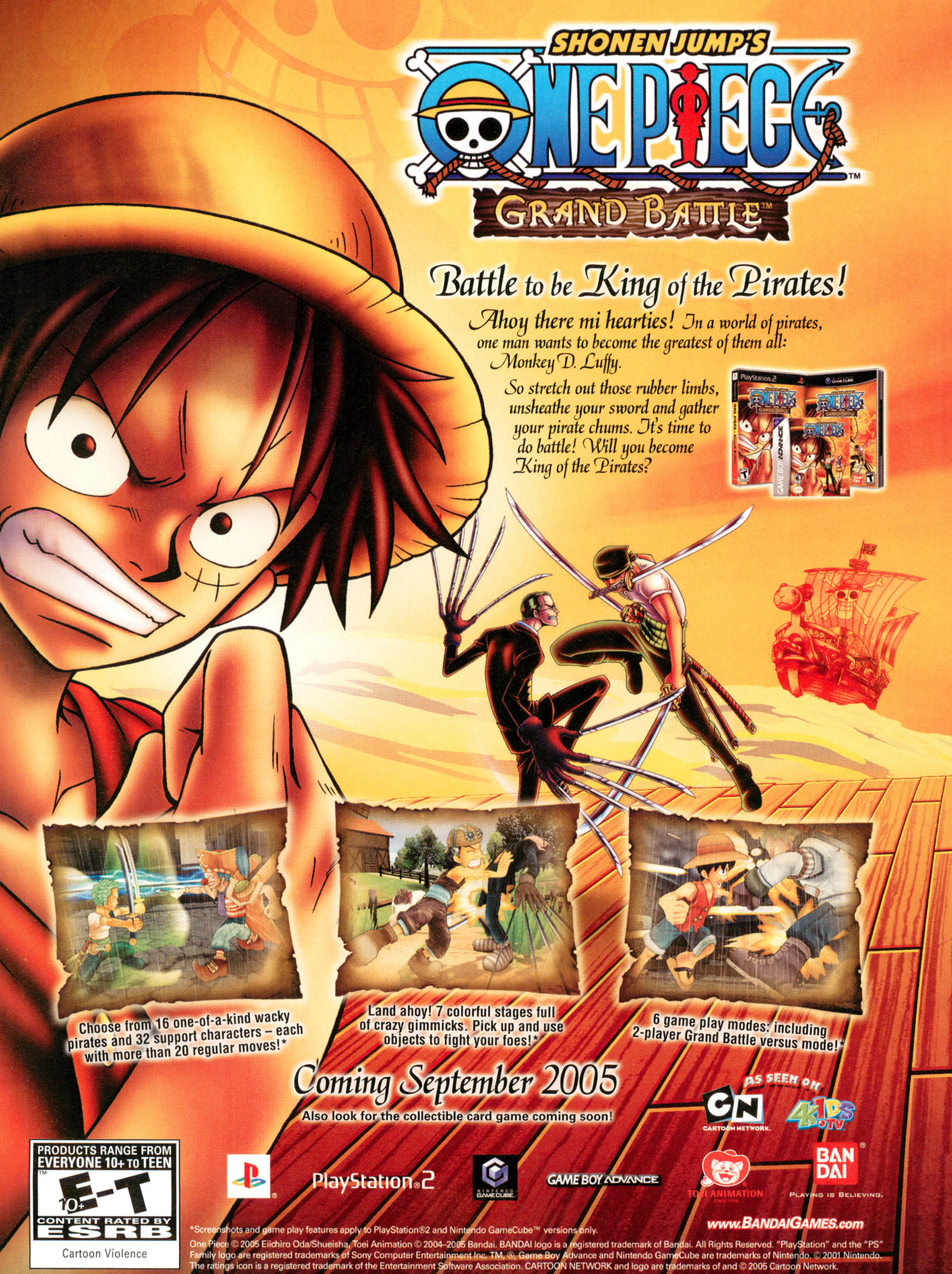
4. Waterworld - Virtual Boy
Every bit as painful as the movie, but for completely different reasons.

3. Home Improvement - Super NES
Maybe I didn't watch every episode, but I'm pretty sure I never saw a dinosaur eat Tim.

2. International Karate Plus - GBA
If this game is in fact based on a real group of ninjas, I hope one day they get their revenge.

1. Superman - N64
Titus, oh, my dear Titus. Why have you forsaken me?





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RETURN OF THE KING

Nintendo Power visits with King Kong developers Michel Ancel and Xavier Poix about making the game and working with Peter Jackson.

By Chris Shepperd

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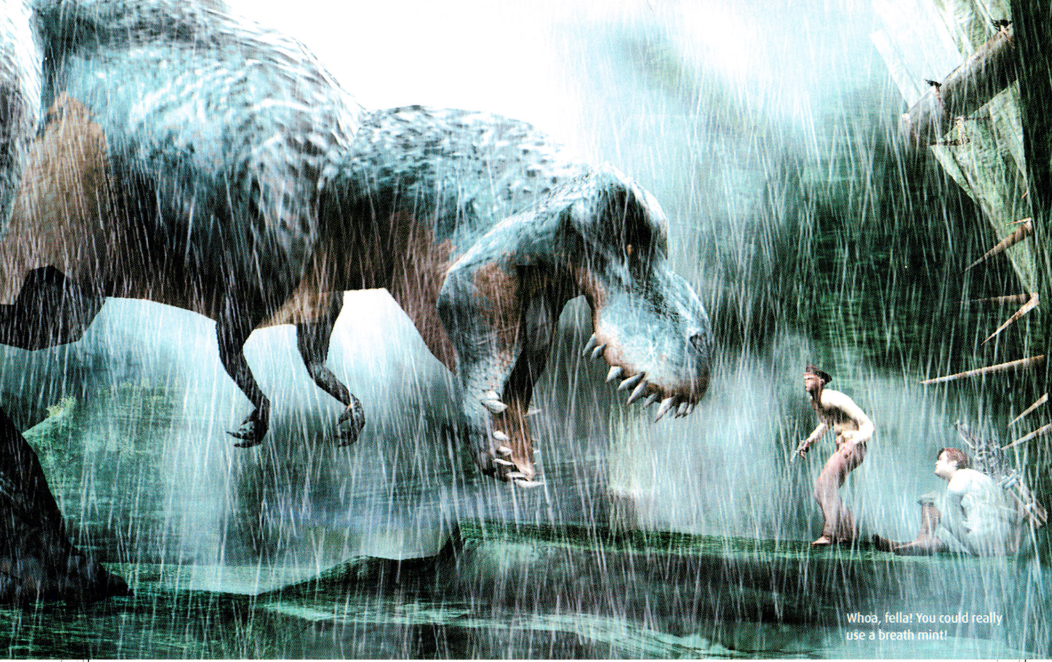


Whoa, fella! You could really use a breath mint!

With its sandy beaches, perpetual sunshine and amazing cuisine, it's truly incredible any work can get done in Montpellier, France, which makes Michel Ancel and his Ubisoft team's efforts even more remarkable.

I could get used to working in a place like this!

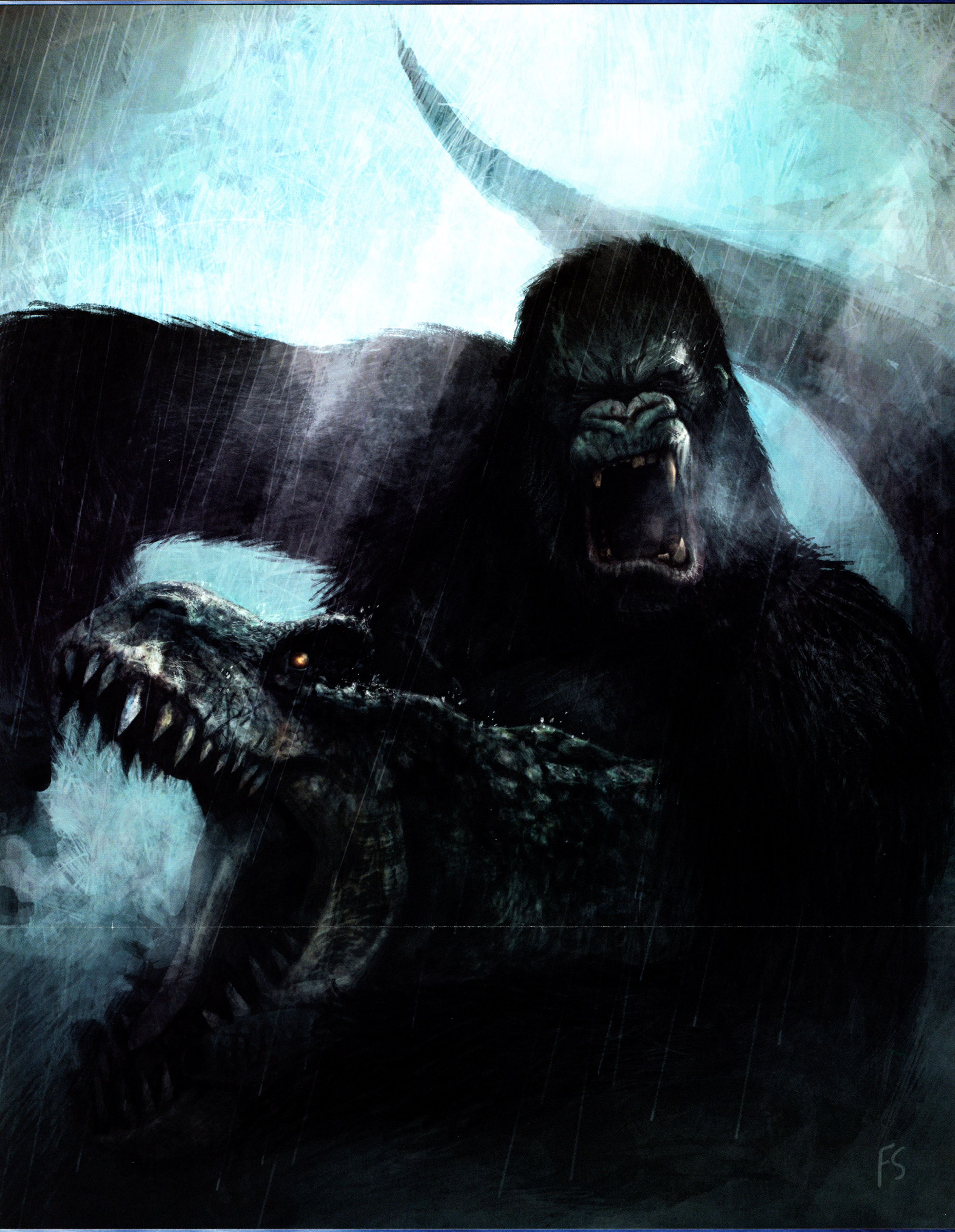
Among those who have taken notice of the team's obvious development talents, especially its gift for storytelling, is moviemaker Peter Jackson, himself considered a master storyteller. When searching for someone to bring his latest creation—a remake of the classic movie *King Kong*—to the video game world, Jackson requested the aid of Ubisoft director Michel Ancel. In an era of sequels and derivative offerings, Ancel and his crew have made waves throughout the video game industry by producing two brand-new concepts from scratch: first the fun and lighthearted Rayman games, then the critical darling Beyond Good & Evil. Both combine engaging stories and marvelous gameplay mechanics, with none of the gratuitousness plaguing the industry today. Not even an out-of-the-way French town like Montpellier can keep such a track record secret forever.

The studio's location is a sight to behold. Nestled in residential suburbs, the building is a renovated farmhouse that long ago lost the battle against urban sprawl. It is completely nondescript—the plain, yellow walls and obscuring trees almost beg one to ignore it. But inside, the house has been transformed into a hub of high-tech wizardry. A team of approximately 80 focused developers squeeze into the dim rooms. It's difficult to walk through the claustrophobic workspaces without worrying about tripping on cables or crashing into one of the gargantuan monitors on each developer's desk. But the environment suits King Kong game producer Xavier Poix. "We can't expand, so we have to think differently. We say, 'Let's recruit 10 artists, but wait—we don't have the room. How can we get this [concept] to appear on the screen with [the people] we have?' As a result, we have programmers who are very, very talented," he explains.

When speaking with Ancel and Poix, it is obvious they are humbled and elated by the opportunity to collaborate with Peter Jackson on such an enormous project. When asked about working on a movie-adaptation game as opposed to an original story, Poix responds, "If it wasn't for Peter Jackson, I'd probably answer differently, but it's Peter Jackson's emotions and mind that have created this universe, and his universe is perfect." Development on the game has now been under way for over two years; with several months left until both the movie and the game are released, the game developers see their beginnings with the King Kong project as ancient history. Memories of how they began the project are lost among the stag-

PETER JACKSON'S

KING KONG™



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gering amount of work left to do, largely due to the unique way they must approach game development when working with Peter Jackson's movie studio, Weta workshop.

Jackson's vision of the King Kong universe is complete—no detail of its locations, inhabitants, terrain, weather or anything else has been neglected. But because the game developers must begin their work long before a movie has been completed, they often have little to go on besides the film's concept art. Fortunately, for the King Kong project Weta shared as many movie details as they could, such as how Kong moves and beats his chest.

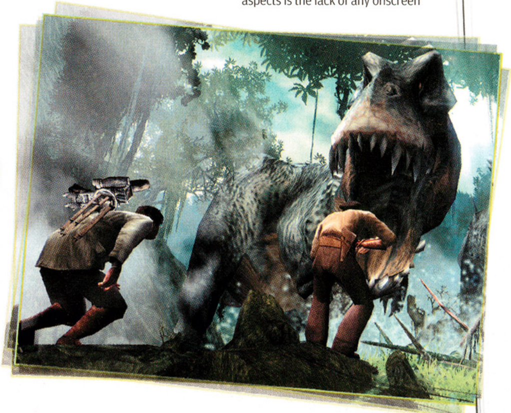
For Ancel, the method of simultaneous film and game development is both liberating and nerve-racking. He has the freedom to develop anything that he believes will fit within Jackson's universe, but he doesn't always know exactly what that means. Fortunately, Jackson understands this—he doesn't insist that everything in the movie be in the game, and vice versa. As Poix explains, "We have no boundaries—we just have the whole world. Peter Jackson is the first one who said, 'Yes, go in this or that direction, because it's something I couldn't have done in the movie.'" The process has been more positive than Ancel ever imagined it would. "So far, Peter Jackson hasn't rejected any ideas. It's incredible. I think he knows video games have their own rules and . . . if we're asking for something, it's for a special purpose for the game." One example is the notion of reusable supplies such as ammunition. Without modern technology, random crates of ammo would be sorely out of place on Skull Island, King Kong's stomping grounds. So, the game developers invented a small plane that occasionally flies over to supply the people on the ground. Such a contrivance isn't necessary in the movie, but it's crucial in video games. The game developers found a way to satisfy the game's needs and integrate the concept seamlessly into Peter Jackson's vision of the King Kong universe.

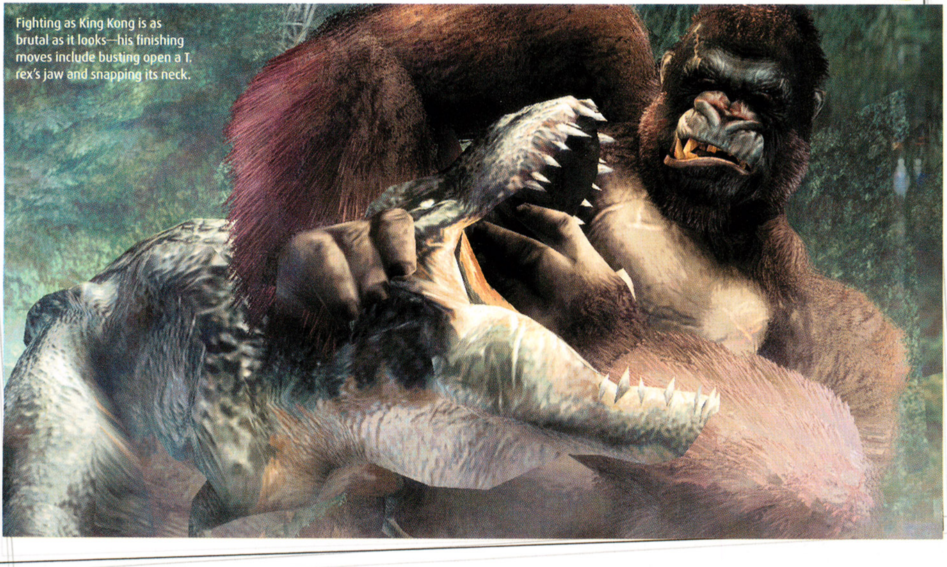
It would have been easy for the team to simply follow the same storyline as the movie, but the result would have been perilously similar to many movie adaptations of late—big-budget disappointments. Ancel and Poix have had the sometimes unenviable task of balancing movie faithfulness with original gameplay. Ancel shares, "We tried to bring a new kind of experience because it wouldn't be fair for us to say to the players, 'You like the movie, so you're going to buy the game? Then we don't care if it's a bad or good game because we know you're going to buy it.' I want to respect all the people that would be interested in the game. I think gamers will be pleased to know that this is a real game and not a slave to the movie."

Survival of the Fittest

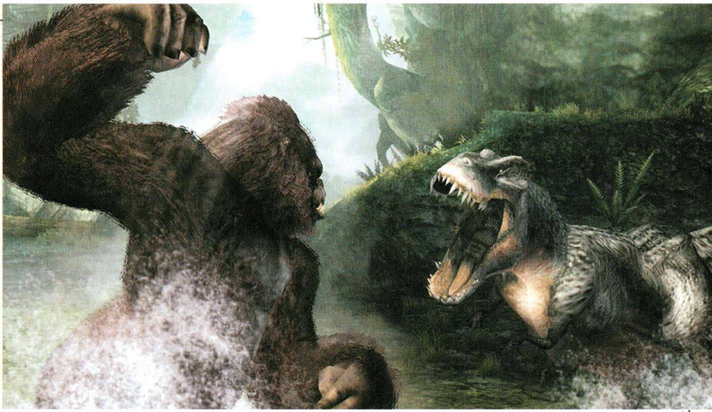
To make the movie and game experientially different, Ancel and his team worked to personalize the player's actions—to make the player feel like he is the star, not someone on the outside looking in. To that end, many of the gameplay mechanics help accentuate the emotions of the player. One of the most dynamic aspects is the lack of any onscreen

> "I think gamers will be pleased to know that this is a real game and not a slave to the movie."
>
> —Michel Ancel



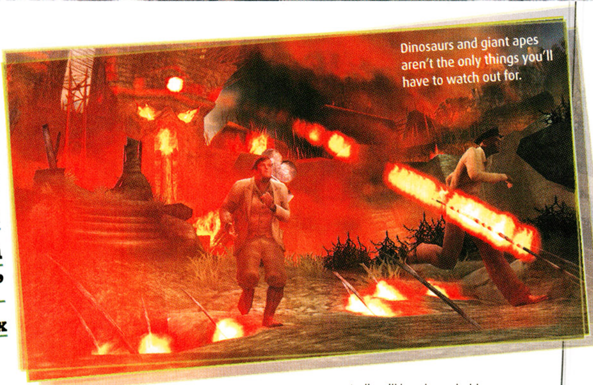


Fighting as King Kong is as brutal as it looks—his finishing moves include busting open a T. rex's jaw and snapping its neck.



display, at any time. The player has no hit points, life bar, ammo count (although ammo is still limited) or inventory—he instead receives cues from animations and facial expressions of his friends and enemies, and hindered character movement to help him analyze whether he has been hit or has damaged an enemy. "It's about immersion; it's about surviving; surviving is not inventory—when you're surviving in the jungle you're not carrying tons of materials and food and things like that . . . and [besides] the game takes place in 1933, and there weren't HUDs then," elaborates Ancel. The lack of onscreen display makes the player much more aware of his surroundings, increasing the intensity and anxiety. The absence of an onscreen display also aids the transition from the first-person view of Jack Driscoll to the third-person perspective of King Kong during gameplay, an aspect Ancel stressed needed to be as smooth as possible to maintain continuity during levels.

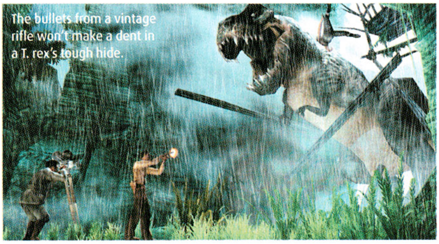
> **"We have no boundaries—we just have the whole world that Peter Jackson has created."**
>
> **—Xavier Poix**



Dinosaurs and giant apes aren't the only things you'll have to watch out for.

Without question, King Kong is the king of the jungle. But if he's the king what does that make all the other animals? Skull Island is a self-contained setting with its own set of rules and its own food chain. For example, small salamanders are prey to giant bats, which are, in turn, prey to raptors, then T. rexes, and T. rexes to Kong himself. The player often must intervene in this food chain to survive. For example, to distract a pack of raptors in his path, the player may have to toss a lizard in a corner, which draws a bat out of the sky and within striking distance of the raptors, who leave their hunting grounds long enough for the player to make his escape. But that's just one method—a stack of skeletal ribs from a decayed dinosaur might make sufficient spears for the player to take down the dinosaur directly. In an another twist, some enemies simply can't be killed by humans—the player can defeat them only as Kong. It is this kind of dynamic gameplay that is at the heart of King Kong. The world exists unto itself, and the player can feel and see the heartbeat of the island at every turn.

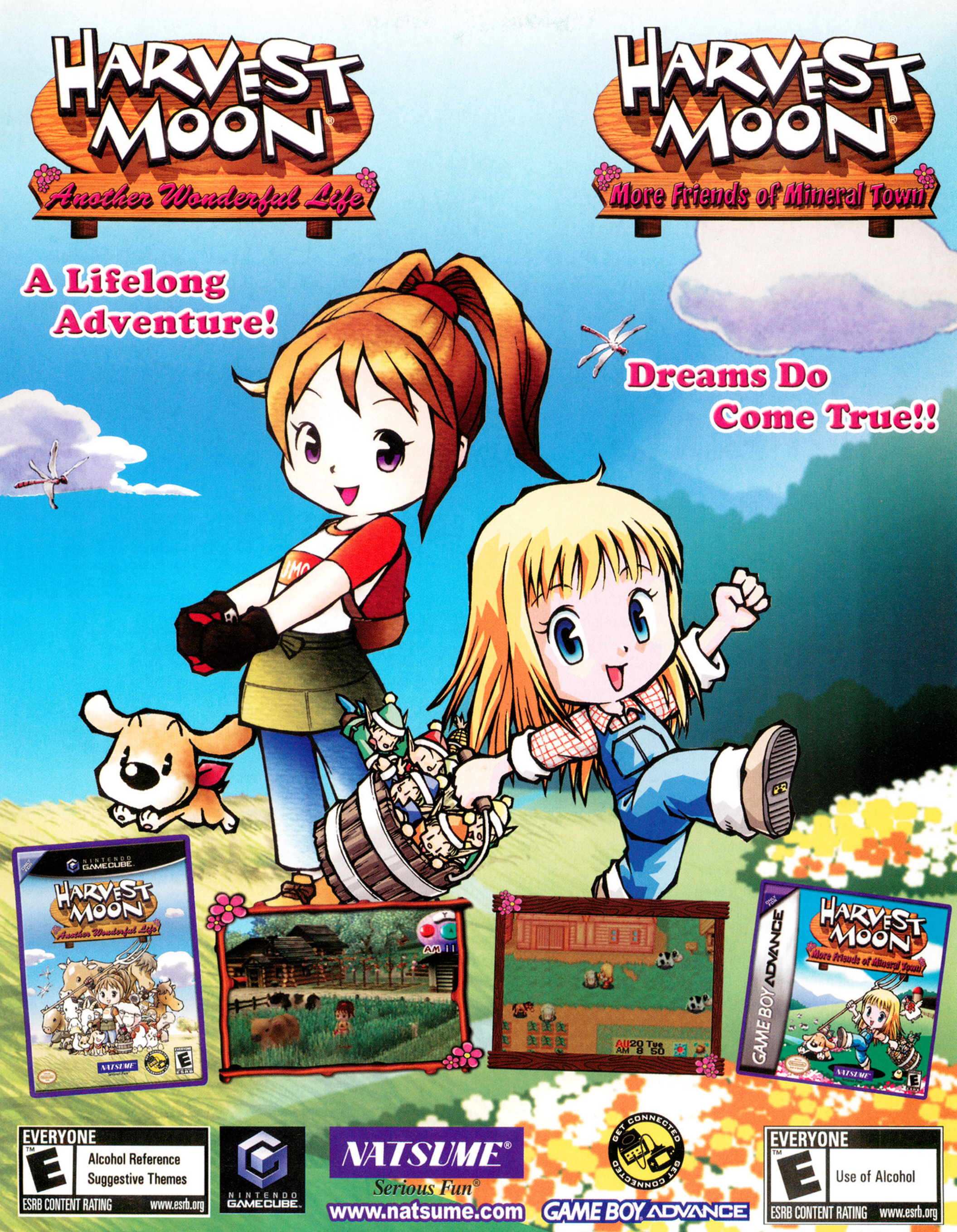
The independently functioning universe allows the game's difficulty to self-adjust. If a player has a tough time through a certain section of the game, fewer enemies and more weapons will be available the next time he plays it. Conversely, a player who blasts through a section will face more obstacles than expected in the next area. But a player's skill will not change the overall cinematic experience—he won't miss an event because he beat an area in record time, or because he failed to kill a quota of enemies. This emphasis on cinematic storytelling and accessibility by all players makes it clear why Ancel and his team were chosen to create this game—they never sacrifice the story, nor exclude any skill level of gamer from the experience.



The bullets from a vintage rifle won't make a dent in a T. rex's tough hide.

Life After Kong

With so much work left to do on King Kong, Ancel and his team are understandably reluctant to look past the game's release and into the future. But if all goes well, Ubisoft's Montpellier studio will be a household name among gamers, and fans will start anticipating the team's next big thing. Ancel insists that at the moment there's nothing in the queue, however. It remains to be seen whether the team will pursue another movie adaptation any time soon. Poix admits, "It's true that people prefer to work, generally speaking, on things that are made internally, but to do so takes ages." Which may be part of the reason that fans of Beyond Good & Evil aren't any closer to a much-desired sequel. "I hear requests all the time, but it's really out of my hands," Ancel insists. The advent of next-generation consoles also makes future projects difficult to plan. "The next consoles will be amazing in terms of graphics, so we'd probably need more people to accomplish [future titles]," Poix explains. No matter what project comes along, it sounds like the team will need a bigger farmhouse.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INSIDE ZELDA

NINTENDO POWER'S MONTHLY CHECK-IN FROM THE ZELDA DEVELOPMENT TEAM.

(Part 5)

THE LEAD STORY ON BIT PARTS

SATOMI ASAKAWA | **NINTENDO** | **KYOTO**

The cast of characters and creatures that surround most of Nintendo's headliners is truly massive. Who gets at the heart of our heroes by designing around the edges? Designers like Nintendo's Satomi Asakawa, that's who. She's one of the creators of Nintendo's secondary characters, and the woman behind Twilight Princess's community of NPCs. Much of what we feel we all know about Link—who is he, what he believes in, where he comes from—is deeply connected to every other character that he's bumped into over the years, not just the major collisions with Zelda and Ganon. It's not often that you hear from the mind behind the masses—and Asakawa offers one of the most colorful perspectives that we've ever heard regarding the art of bit parts.

Her first-ever assignment for Nintendo? Asakawa's owl still soars in the memories of Zelda fans everywhere.

Playing God with Bit Characters

My first character-design assignment for Nintendo was the wise, old owl in Ocarina of Time, Kaepora Gaebora. Mr. Miyamoto left me a yellow sticky note with a few pointers for the owl's design and turned me loose to explore the owl's look on my own. So casual! I'd always thought of Mr. Miyamoto as a game god, so I'd assumed that he'd lord his influence over his creative team, but I was really surprised by what a friendly person he was, though he does maintain extremely high standards for gameplay.

My responsibility has always been to create sidekicks and secondary characters, not the main ones. In Majora's Mask, for instance, I designed the white monkeys and the turtle-island; in the Pikmin series, I did the president and several enemy characters, such as the Waterwraith. That's one of my favorites. Though the Waterwraith has a giant, menacing presence, motoring around on two stone rolling pins, it really breaks down once you smash the pins. I often like to attach that kind of on-and-off dynamic to my characters. But I'm not only an animal creator. I've also done people like the Bombchu Gallery landlady and Ikana Canyon's Pamela, both side characters in Majora's Mask, plus—one of my biggest splashes—the Pianta people in Super Mario Sunshine. That was a huge learning opportunity, and it's been a pleasure to see the Pianta show up in other Mario games since Sunshine. My workmates always think that I like to create chubby creatures. I've got to agree! Chubby; love it. And blockheads; that's another favorite!

Character design involves taking care of everything about a character. After the director provides the general direction, the character designer goes through a long process that starts with creating sketches and some modeling, then does the animation and is ultimately in charge of all of the character sequences in the game. It's a big challenge, especially when you factor in how the player will interact with the character. Originally, I'd sought out a career in animated films, so thinking about player interaction is very important. My desire is that all of my characters leave an impression on a player; not just a fleeting sensation that they're just cute or strange, but a lasting attachment that makes the player think about them for a long time. It's the holy grail, but I really strive to create characters that players will later wonder how they're doing—as if they're actually friends who live far, far away in the real world.

Turtle-Island

My desire is that all of my characters leave an impression on a player; not just a fleeting sensation that they're just cute or strange . . .

White Monkeys

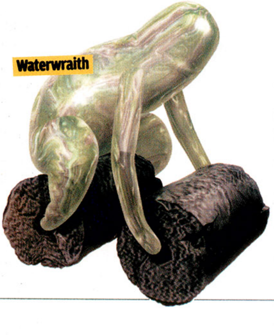
The Quest for CG Design

In high school, I was interested in graphic design, and I studied imaging art during my college years, where I was somewhat drawn to puppet animation, though my university work centered on research and the study of surrealistic images. Overall, though, I felt that something was missing in my life. After I graduated, I worked for a video-production company on commercial promotion videos. In those days, computer-graphic creations were getting a lot of attention, and I wanted to study CG design, though there was nowhere to study it as a discipline in Japan. So I saved up money to leave the country and study abroad—no specific place in mind. One day, purely by chance, I read about the CG class held at the Vancouver Film School in Canada and I learned that it was about to split off into an independent school. So after six years in video production, off I went to the new DigiPen Institute of Technology in 1996—which of course would move across the border to neighbor Nintendo's US headquarters just a few years later.

At DigiPen, I spent two intense years studying the theory and technique of CG animation. But that wasn't all I learned—I also studied how to communicate in the uniquely North American way! Here's what I mean: In Japanese culture, it's customary to think that if you state your opinion, you may alienate someone and make them uncomfortable; but in Canada during my studies, I really needed to learn how to be comfortable with saying exactly what I was thinking, then listening very carefully to their response. In those days, I really learned my ability to communicate—and even debate!—with others without feeling like I was starting a battle. Not so easy when you've grown up in Japan! Of course, picking up English during my stay in Canada was challenging and valuable as well. While I wasn't rolling in cash while I was in Vancouver, I gained a precious treasure of experiences while I was in that beautiful city. Little did I know that all of that life experience would add up to a career in character creation someday!

Pikmin 2's president made his authority known—and his puffy presence was ideal for his character.

When I graduated from the DigiPen Institute of Technology, I wanted to get a job in North America at an animation studio like Pixar. It was my dream to work on a production like the *Wallace & Gromit* series or on a movie like *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. As it turned out, I applied to only one Japanese company—Nintendo. I'd lived near Nintendo in Kyoto since I was 12 years old, and I'd always loved the Mario-world characters that the company created. I'd always felt a deep


Waterwraith

Pamela

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I do love Kyoto . . . with its long history as a place of great craftsmanship—which I truly believe connects to Nintendo's own history.

Kyoto, Japan

Photo courtesy of Rebekah Lane

connection to Nintendo. I sent my animated short, "OneBigBanana," which had been my DigiPen graduate project, to Nintendo as part of my application. Must have been received well, since I got a position! So off I went again—back to Japan.

Truth be told, I'd never been into video games, even though I'd grown up surrounded by them. My father worked for a game company, so consoles had always been in our home. I think I first connected with console gaming with the Super NES . . . possibly with the release of Glory of Hercules III, which was sadly never released in North America. It was an RPG that really made an impact on me. It was the story of a hero who lost his memory and went on a quest with his friends to beat an evil power that destroyed a world; during their journey, they heard about many sad, tragic events caused by the evil forces, which just fueled their vengeance. In the end, the hero confronted the evil, which surprisingly was tied to the hero himself, he atoned for his own sins by carrying heavy rocks to rebuild the world. At that time, I was deeply moved—and quite surprised—by how much video games could create such a range of emotional expression. Again, who could have imagined such rich experiences would lend themselves to a career at Nintendo?

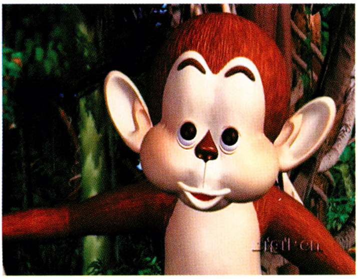


Image courtesy of DigiPen Institute of Technology. ©1998

Asakawa's graduate project for the DigiPen Institute of Technology, "OneBigBanana," was the perfect calling card for getting noticed by Nintendo.

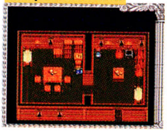
Twilight Princess's villagers have amazing depth of character—and Asakawa is bringing their emotions to the fore.

Twilight's Secret Society

Here in Kyoto, we've all been told that Twilight Princess got a huge reaction at E3. What pressure! Little known fact: I played the voice of Beth in the E3 playable demo. For Twilight Princess, the character-design process is vastly different from my earlier projects. After studying the game development plan, all of us on the character design team present ideas to the game's prime custodians, like Mr. Nakano [Inside Zelda, Part 3], who's in charge of overall character design, and Mr. Takizawa [Inside Zelda, Part 2], the art director for Twilight Princess. Mr. Nakano has a real passion for the Zelda world, and his creative ideas are remarkable. It's an exciting experience to say the least!

I'm responsible for all NPCs in Twilight Princess. Because this game demands realistic human characters, this is quite a challenging task, as you can imagine. My hope is to create strange, cunning characters for the game—it's a unique combination. But I hope to turn my fantasy into reality with this project. Such characters can also elicit fear from players. Think Disney's *Alice in Wonderland*, one of my all-time favorite animated movies, and you'll get a sense of what I'm going for: all of its characters were colorful and vivid, but the fact that they inhabit dark, moody environments makes them very strange. As the realism in graphics start to hit their limits, I think that we can go even further only by reaching for such deeper impressions with players. And I can vouch for the whole development team here in Kyoto—everyone wants to make Twilight Princess into an extremely engaging experience.

Glory of Hercules III



Gaming didn't make such a huge impression on Asakawa until the Super NES era with this mythical RPG.

Back to My Roots

Since every day is consumed by the work on Twilight Princess, I often go home very late, as does my husband, who is one of Nintendo's sound effect programmers. I work in my creative studio; he works in his sound studio; but we try to get away and refresh our minds as often as possible! Kyoto summers are very hot—and the humidity can be terrible!—and I often long for the beautiful summers in Vancouver. I do love Kyoto, though, with its long history as a place of great craftsmanship—which I truly believe connects to Nintendo's own history. All of us here at Nintendo are all friends, but even more we're devoted to game development as a serious craft. With so many people passionately committed to game creation, it's not hard to envision all of the vigorous discussions—always productive!—that we're always having about how to make Twilight Princess the most alluring game that you'll ever play.

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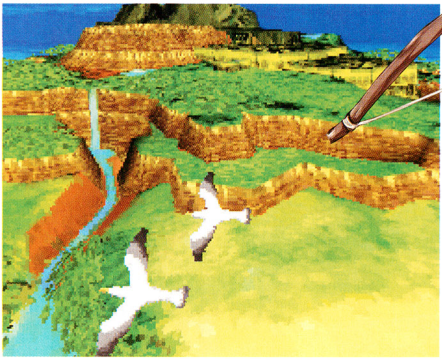
Land of the Lost

Konami's new survival game Lost in Blue will push your body, and your DS, to the limits.

By Chris Shepperd

A violent storm has destroyed your ship, and you've been tossed into the sea. Just when all hope appears to be lost, you wash up on a sandy beach. What happens from here is all up to you. Have you got the skills to get off the island alive?



EVERYONE 10+
10+
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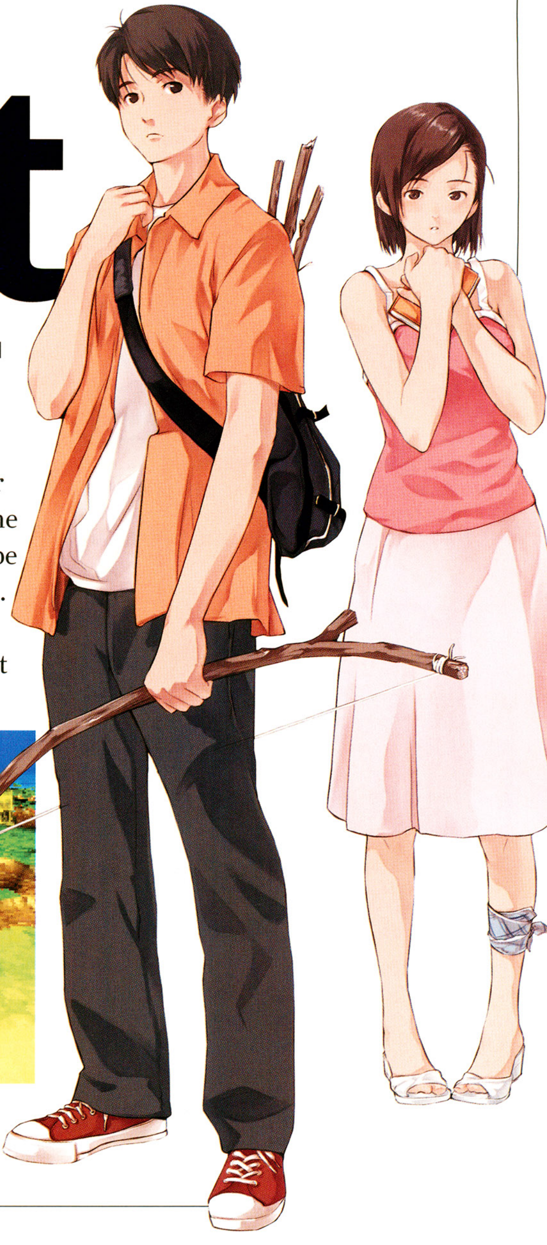

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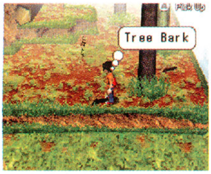
Paradise Lost

Find the essentials you need to survive.

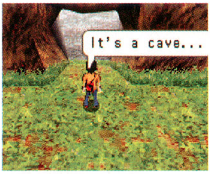
You've landed on what seems to be an uninhabited tropical island full of good food and clean water. Under normal circumstances this might be an ideal vacation spot, but for you the situation can't get much worse. The first several hours of your life on the island are the most critical—you're exhausted and dehydrated, and after being beaten by the waves, you have almost no energy left to live.

Humans need only a few essentials to survive: water, food, heat and shelter. To your great fortune, you can find all of these things very close to where you washed ashore. You can drink water from the freshwater stream, fresh fruit along the coast will rejuvenate your strength, and a nearby cave makes a good place to build a fire and will keep you out of the elements. You'll have to act quickly and efficiently if you intend to survive. You don't have time to think about how to contact help or get off the island—there will be time for that after your body recovers.

For all the places you'll explore and all the things you'll do while on the island, never forget your basic survival needs. If your health is low or your food supply is slim, remember the steps you took to survive when you first landed on the island. If you keep your fire stoked and your body happy with food and water, the more likely you'll stay alive long enough to get rescued.

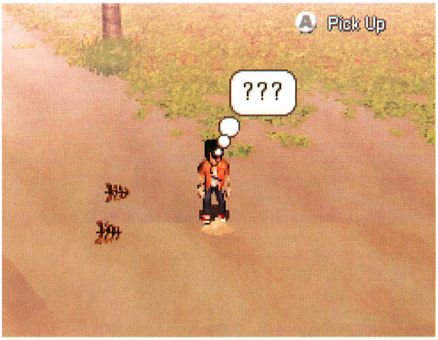


Find tree bark and twigs around the base of a nearby tree to assemble a simple but effective fire-starting kit.



Your new home doesn't look very comfortable at all, but at least the rent's cheap.

The river's water is cool and refreshing, and is also home to plenty of tasty fish. You'll spend a lot of time along its banks.



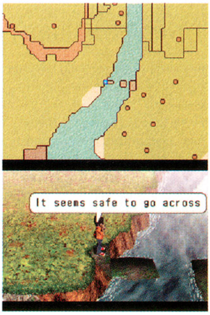
When the tide goes out, all kinds of edible goodies remain along the beach. Roll up your pants and search for your next meal.

You've Got a Friend

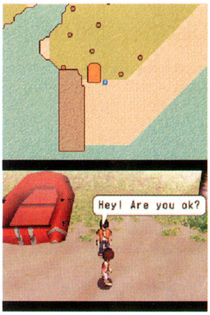
Rescue castaway Skye near her lifeboat.

Your first day on the island, the river's rapids are too dangerous to cross. By the next day, the current will die down and you'll be able to reach the other side. South of the river crossing, you'll discover that you're not alone on the island! A life raft from the same ship you were on has carried a young lady named Skye to the shore. She's in as bad a shape as you were yesterday—you'll have to help her to the cave and get a fire going so she can dry off.

You'll soon learn what a great team you and Skye make. While you're out hunting and exploring, Skye will help create essentials such as rope and baskets from vines and bamboo. She is also a much better cook than you—when you're both hungry, she'll make a meal from the food you give her for the both of you.



When the river settles, the exposed rocks make a nifty bridge over to the rest of the coastline.



When you meet Skye, she's in bad shape. Worse, the waves are too big for you to use the life raft to escape.

Live Long and Prosper

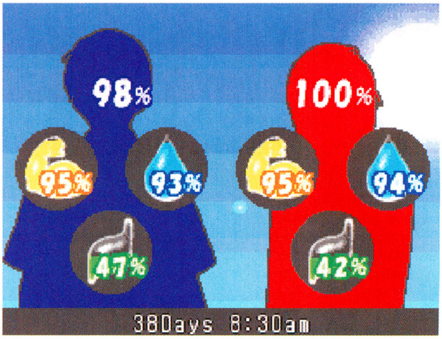
Keep track of your health and inventory.

When trying to stay alive, your first instinct is simply to find and eat as much food as possible. But survival is much more complex than just eating a lot. Your continued health has many intertwined aspects. For example, to regain and maintain stamina, you must have food in your stomach and a place to rest, but without being properly hydrated you won't be able to eat. If you run out of stamina, your body will sap your system's food and water in a last-ditch effort to stay alive. The same goes for Skye, although the rate at which she burns food energy and consumes water is different from yours. Keep an eye on her meters and make sure she stays properly hydrated.

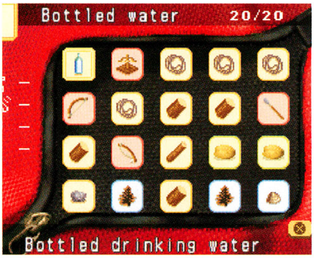
Along with knowing how much to eat, drink and rest, you'll have to pay attention to how much you can carry. During your journeys into the wild, you'll find many important items such as food, firewood and materials for building tools. Check your inventory space frequently—if it fills up, it's time to head back to the cave. Also, be sure to pick up only essential items—for example, if you have a fire-maker, there's no need to continue collecting tree bark.

Lastly, remember how far from the cave you are, and how long it will take to get back. Although Skye didn't come with you, both you and she will lose energy during your trek home. If Skye is hungry when you start heading back, she could be in serious trouble by the time you reach her.

Welcome back.
Today we're
having stew.



Before you head out on your own, make sure that both you and Skye are in peak health. You can keep track of your companion's vitals even when you're apart.



It wouldn't be a life-threatening error, but it would be a shame to have to discard a rare or valuable item because you hadn't yet found dinner. Leave room in your inventory to catch your next meal.

Variety Is the Spice of Life

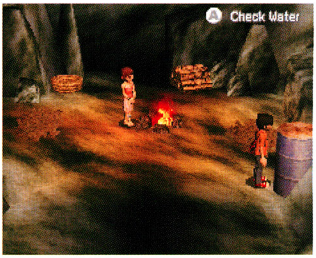
Discover fine cuisine all over the island.

Man cannot live on coconuts and seaweed alone. Fortunately, the food selection on the island is a lot more diverse than that. True, you could eat the same, easy-to-find victuals every day. But the greater variety you bring back to the cave, the better a cook Skye will become.

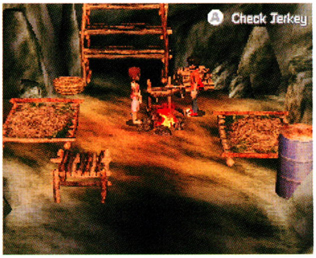
You can gather food from virtually every corner of the island. Along rivers and coastlines, catch fish using spears, rods and traps, and find shellfish buried in the sand as the tide rolls out. You'll find animals roaming the grassy highlands—hunt them down with a combination of traps and weapons to bag a sizable feast. And almost everywhere you go, you'll find fruit in the trees and vegetables in the ground.

One group of edible foods you must be careful of are mushrooms. Most mushrooms will make you sick, but a few have amazing abilities, such as boosting your stamina and hydration.

To improve the taste of your fare, you can also search the ground for spices and flavorings. Although they're not necessary to prepare a meal and don't supply any nutritional value, collecting them improves Skye's cooking ability, as well as her mood.



A couple of weeks into your stay, a barrel will wash ashore. You can use it to store excess water. When you're away from the cave, Skye will drink from the barrel, allowing you to explore longer on your own.



Once Skye becomes a skilled enough cook, she'll request that you make a food-drying rack. Once it's built, she'll make jerky from fish and game. She'll eat the jerky when she gets hungry, even while you're out in the wild.

Six Degrees of Preparation

Find materials to build furniture and upgrade tools.

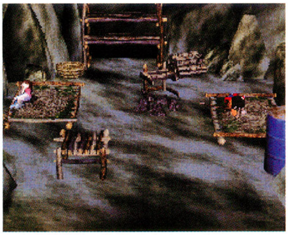
As much as you'd like to get back to civilization as soon as you can, you'll likely be on the island for quite a while. Given such a reality, you should make your living quarters as comfortable and useful as possible. Furniture like beds, tables and chairs help you relax and burn less energy, while shelving and meat dryers serve more-functional purposes.

Furniture and other fixtures in the cave can be difficult to fabricate. You must have all the right materials, which may include items like rope, logs and furs. Then you must actually put the furniture together yourself via the touch screen. Some pieces, such as the bed, require multiple rounds of construction to finish.

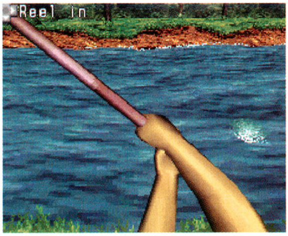
You won't be able to make all of the furniture immediately upon your arrival. Skye will help you decide the right time to make new furniture. Upgrades usually become available when you bring new materials into the cave. For example, when you first show up with vines, Skye will examine them and explain that she can make rope from them.

You can upgrade much of your equipment, as well, by finding new materials. For instance, your first fishing rods will be made from wooden sticks, which are only somewhat effective. But once you have found bamboo, you can make a rod that will break less often and will allow you to catch better fish. The downside is that bamboo is more difficult to attain.

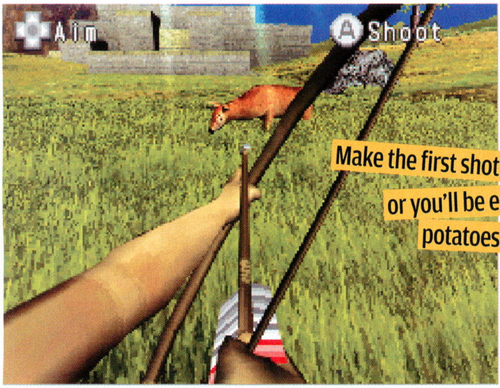
Your old equipment can come in handy—you can make more-efficient fire-starters by augmenting them with bows and arrows. With your new tool, you'll be able to kindle fires much more quickly and easily.



Cave improvements allow Skye to live on her own for longer, giving you more time to explore. Nicer beds will also provide more energy the next day.



Use bamboo to make better fishing rods, then pay attention to the tides and moon phases. Both aspects affect the quality of your catch.



Make the first shot a good one, or you'll be eating potatoes tonight.

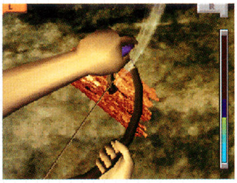
Ensnare a large animal in a trap made from sticks and vines. When it's caught, draw your bow and take it down.

Stay in Touch

Don't Sweat the Technique

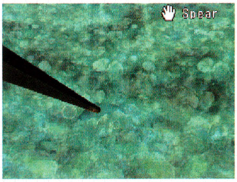
Much of Lost in Blue relies on conventional play control, but many of the game's tasks require the DS's unique features, such as the touch screen and the microphone. The tasks often emulate their real-life counterparts, like in the examples below.

Steal from the Gods



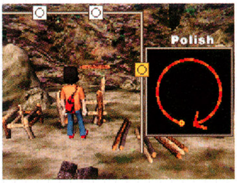
After you get a few sparks going on your fire, the tough work begins. Blow into the microphone to fuel the embers with much-needed oxygen.

The Agile Angler



When you equip a spear, you can peer into the water and see fish swim by. Stab a fish by jabbing at it with the stylus.

Heavy Lifting



At first, the furniture-making minigame is tough. You must quickly trace the symbols on the right with the stylus. Don't worry—it becomes easier with practice.

The Age of Discovery

Search the island for signs of life.

Never lose sight of your goal to get off the island or be rescued. You can't just wait for a ship to pass by or a helicopter to land next to the cave. If you're going to be saved, you're going to have to get out there and explore. Who knows what you'll find.

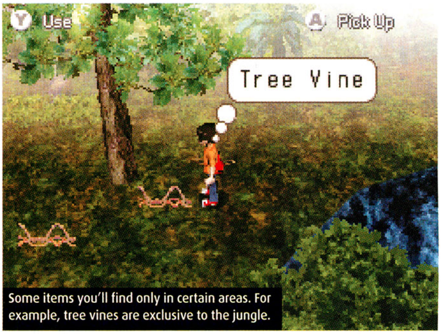
You'll spend a lot of time navigating the craggy cliffs along the river. Above the cliffs are open fields abundant in precious materials, such as feathers for making arrows and exotic foods like raspberries and bird eggs. In fact, many items are available only in one particular region. The only place you'll find radishes and edible dandelions is in the grasslands area, and sturdy bamboo shoots are limited to a small area near the coast.

At the top of the cliffs, you'll discover the source of the river—a tall, majestic waterfall. The cave behind the waterfall leads to what seems like a whole new world. Passing through the cave in one direction leads you to a huge, grassy plateau that's a haven for all sorts of wild beasts, large and small. This is where you'll do most of your hunting with traps and bows and arrows. Abutting the plateau is what appears to be the ruins of an ancient civilization. The high walls and moat prohibit entry—for now.

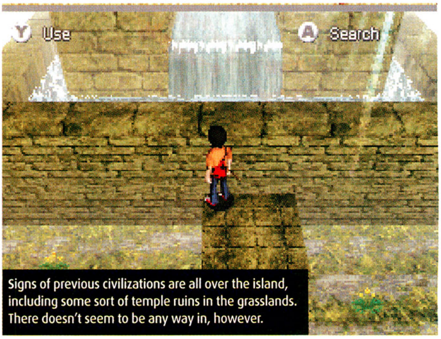
If you take the alternate path out of the cave behind the waterfall, you'll end up in a dark, twisty jungle wracked with dead ends. The jungle is rich in exotic fruits like papayas and pineapples, which are convenient on the go because you don't have to cook them. The vines littering the jungle floor come in handy for making bows and fishing rods, which break all too frequently.

If you manage to hack your way through the jungle, you'll reach the pinnacle of the island—an enormous lake inside a giant, dormant volcanic crater. It's too big to swim across, but you might be able to perform a little handiwork with some logs and rope. Remember, when you intend to head this far inland, pack enough food for the trip—not every place has plentiful fresh food.

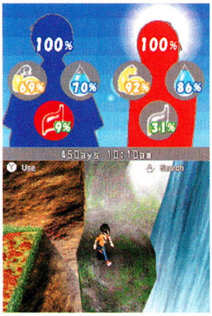
The other side of the lake holds many secrets about the former residents of the island, and a few hints of current inhabitants, as well. Don't expect them to greet you with the welcome wagon when you encounter them. In the face of danger, be bold and courageous—your life depends on it.



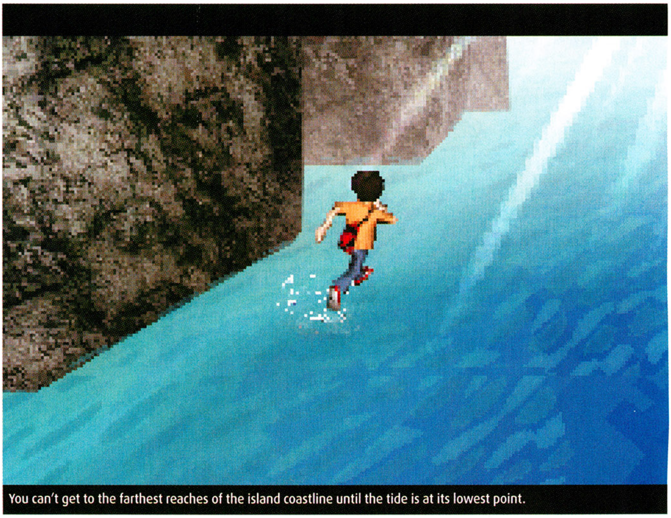
Some items you'll find only in certain areas. For example, tree vines are exclusive to the jungle.



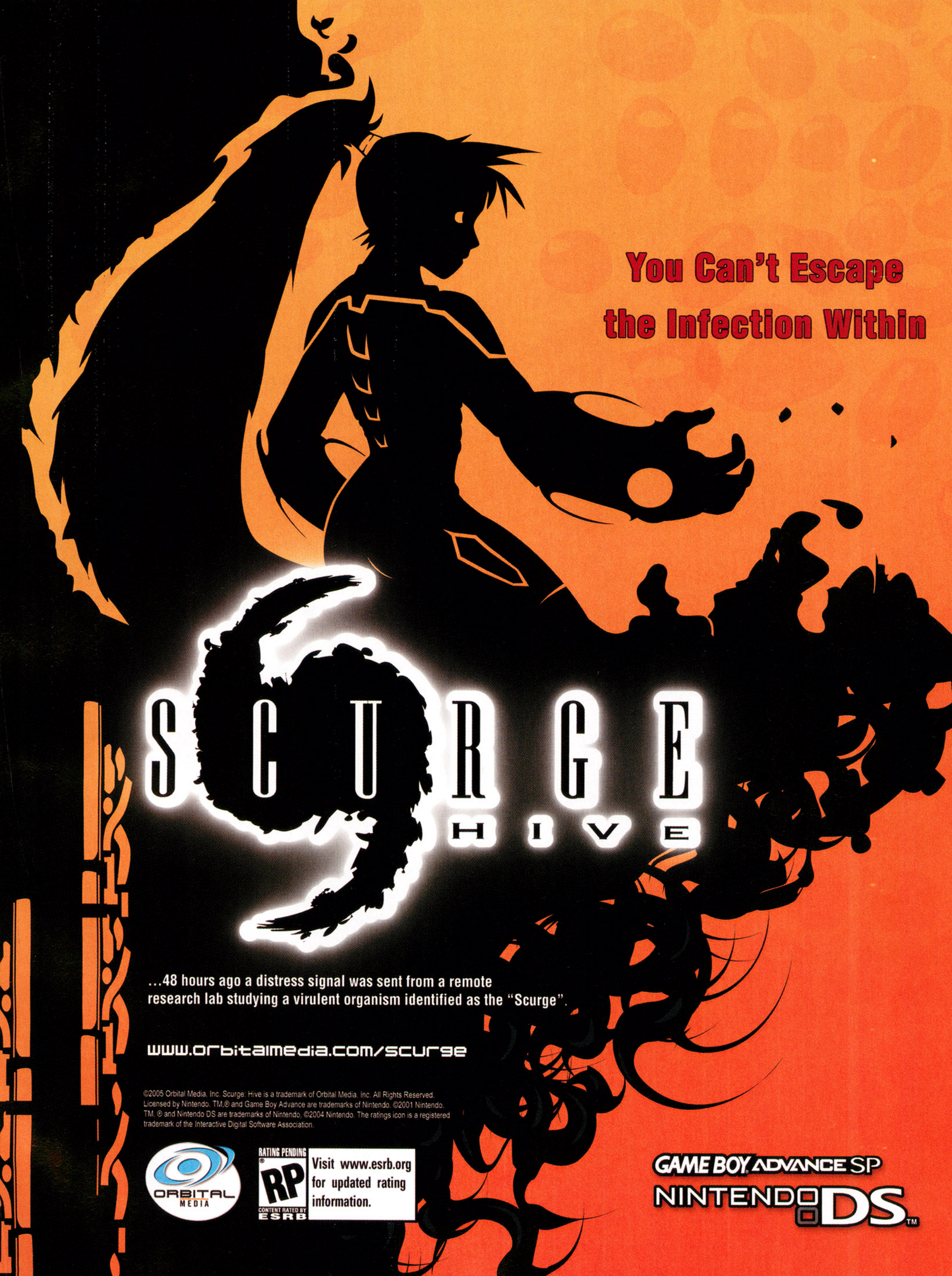
Signs of previous civilizations are all over the island, including some sort of temple ruins in the grasslands. There doesn't seem to be any way in, however.



You'll pass behind the waterfall many times—the cave it conceals leads to the other side of the island.



You can't get to the farthest reaches of the island coastline until the tide is at its lowest point.



You Can't Escape
the Infection Within

SCURGE
HIVE

…48 hours ago a distress signal was sent from a remote research lab studying a virulent organism identified as the "Scurge".

www.orbitalmedia.com/scurge

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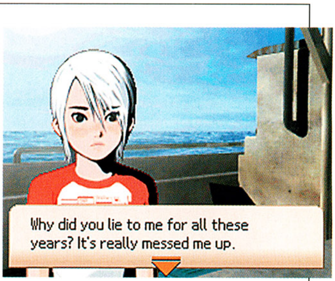
TRACE ELEMENTS

Putting the pieces together, writer Ann Lin has shown a touch for suspense in Northwest-set DS mystery Trace Memory.

By George Sinfield

Blood Edward Island, off the shores of Seattle, holds a mystery that 13-year-old Ashley Robbins is set on solving in Trace Memory, developed by Cing and published by Nintendo. Ann Lin and translators Reiko Ninomiya and Chiko Bird, of Nintendo of America's Product Development department, reworked the Japanese text for an English-speaking audience and gave the character a distinctly American voice.



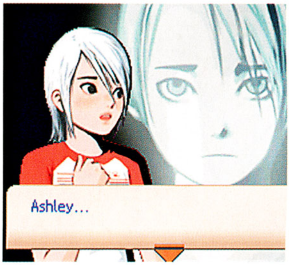
Why did you lie to me for all these years? It's really messed me up.

Who is Ashley Robbins?

"I try to think of Ashley as a complex, three-dimensional character," says Lin of Trace Memory's heroine, a young woman who, after believing for 11 years that both of her parents were dead, has discovered that her father is alive. "I just try to think, you know, would a realistic person react this way? Would a realistic person talk this way without me wanting her to shut up?" Accompanied by her Aunt Jessica to her father's believed whereabouts on Blood Edward Island, Ashley loses track of the woman who raised her, but befriends a ghost, D, whose memories have vanished. "I get kind of hung up on the idea of motivation," explains Lin. "And Ashley, thinking that her parents were dead her entire life, suddenly realizing that at least her father is alive and that her aunt has been lying to her . . . I think that a believable character, a believable person would have certain feelings of betrayal, not just acceptance. I wanted to explore that just a little. I think the [Japanese text] was a little bit more accepting, not really questioning the weirdness of meeting a ghost or any of the [strange] circumstances that had befallen her."

> **"You can identify with them more when they aren't always talking from this high plane about grand, epic themes."**

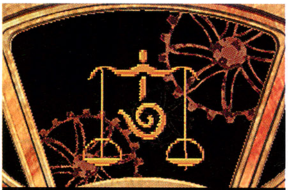
Humor also works its way into Lin's dialogue. For



Ashley...

©2005 Nintendo/CING

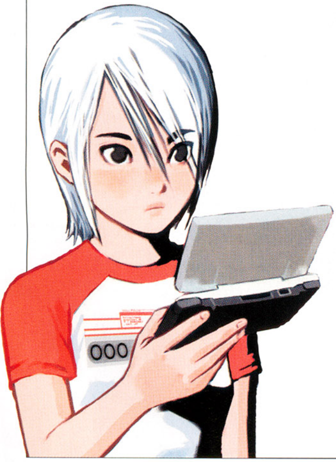
instance, when Ashley hears that the name of a creepy mansion's valet is Wells, she ponders how "butlerish" it sounds. "When you're trying to be serious, the threat of melodrama is always looming, and humor makes the characters more likeable and believable," says Lin. "You can identify with them more when they aren't always talking from this high plane about grand, epic themes like life and death. When you bring it down a little and you crack a few jokes, I think [gamers] find that a lot more engaging."

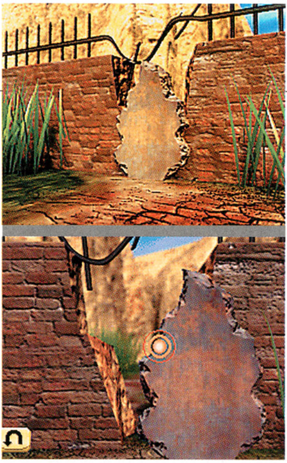


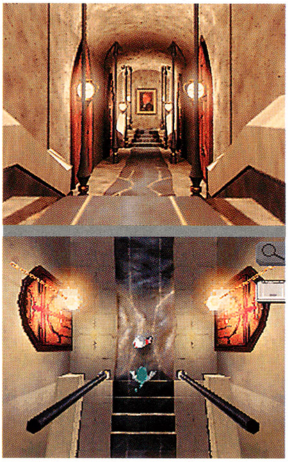
Many of the game's puzzles involve placing elements together to create new images.

When adults write dialogue for characters in their early teens, the results can often sound forced. Lin is careful to give the character a unique voice: "I try not to use lingo that's too trendy, because it's dated as soon as I write the words and it's painful to listen to. I think it's pretty clear that when you read [trendy lingo] the character is more of a caricature than an actual person."

NOA's Product Development group went back and forth with the game's Japanese developers to work out the character's voice, but they found common ground in the graphics. Explains Lin, "Although their take on her character was different from mine, my depiction was based, in large part, off the game's art style. Visually speaking, Ashley has such a wide range of expressions and emotions that I tried to make the text reflect that complexity as well."







A Memorable Adventure

When Ashley and Jessica arrive on the island, Jessica goes inland to find Ashley's father, but it quickly becomes apparent that she will not be returning. As the young heroine sets off to find her family members, the lower screen displays a straight overhead view of her and her surroundings while the upper screen shows still scenes and items of interest. When Ashley comes across something that she can interact with, a magnifying-glass icon on the lower screenlights up. A tap of the icon brings the scene down to the touch-sensitive screen, allowing you to interact with the items in a way that is similar to that of old-school point-and-click PC adventures such as the early Myst games. By tapping an object, you trigger a text message—a clue or a red herring. Clues and dialogue appear as written words. Most words spill out at a constant rate, but in some instances, the words appear more dramatically. In creating the English text, Lin matched the words with the effects. "I was playing through it as I was writing to make sure that what I was writing fit with what was happening on-screen, such as a change in Ashley's expression, a flash, a shaking text box or the speed that the text appears."

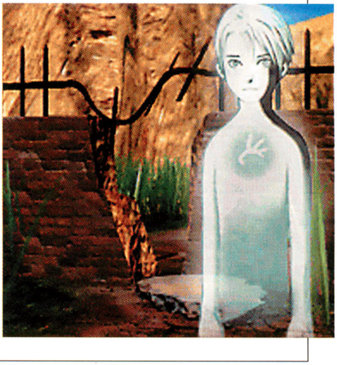
When asked about the process of crafting clues that give enough information about the puzzle without giving away the solution, Lin says "I think at its crux, writing is a collaborative process. You get your peers to review your work and get their feedback." After other writers read the clues and solve the puzzles, she asks questions: "Could they solve it easily? Were they stumped? Also, I think a lot of it is just kind of trust for the North American gamer; that they can pick up on subtlety. Gamers in the US in particular like much more challenging games."

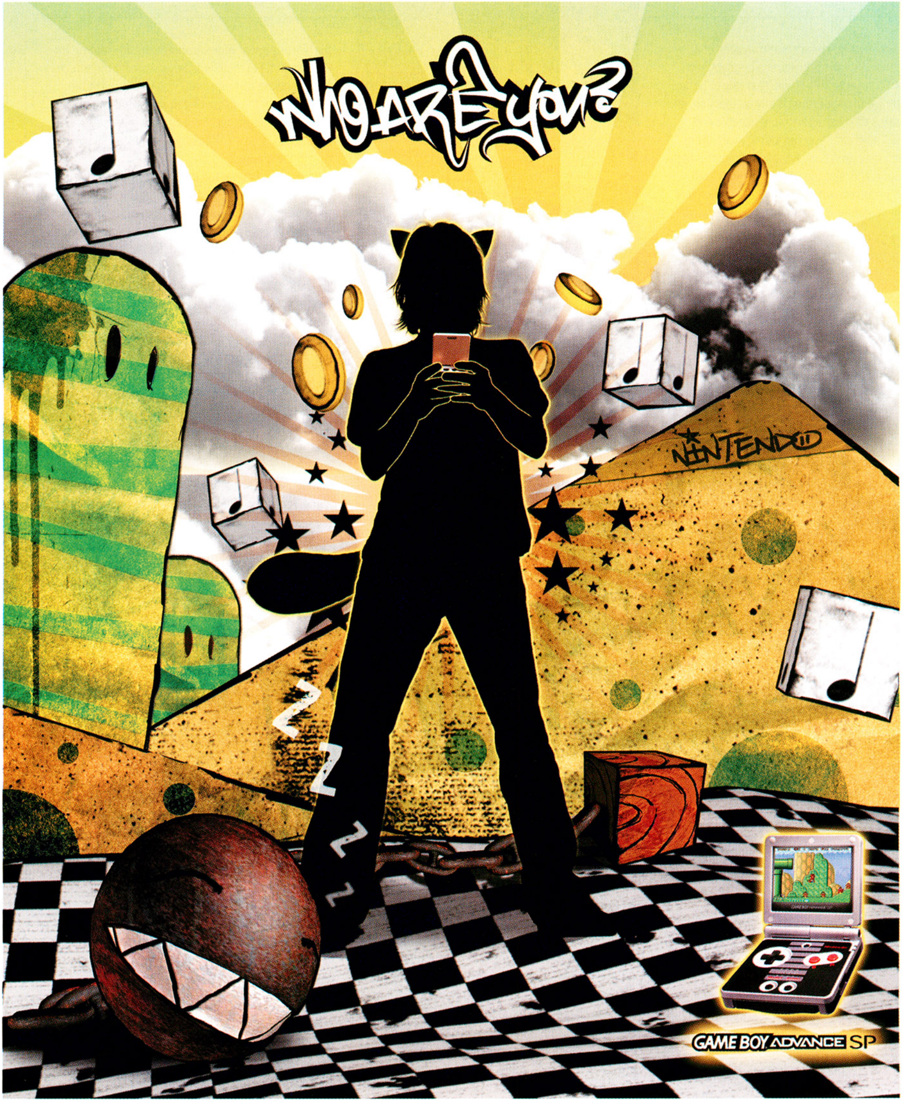
Puzzle-solving often involves the manipulation of objects on the lower screen. Some items, such as a rusty crank that operates a drawbridge, or a stone in a graveyard require a little elbow grease to manipulate. You must move the object slowly and steadily or you'll lose your grip. The addition of object resistance is a subtle touch, but one that grounds you in the game, makes you feel that the items in the environment are real and that the island is real.

To solve more visually oriented puzzles, Ashley has a piece of equipment that her father sent to her: a dual-screen machine that looks similar to a DS, but is called a DTS (Dual Trace System). With it, Ashley can access items from her inventory, take photographs and manipulate the photographs to uncover clues. For example, early in her adventure, Ashley must superimpose photographs of two paintings to uncover a number sequence. Eventually, Ashley learns more about the DTS and its connection to the computer program that has been at the center of her father's work.

Much of the island's back story is brought to light in Ashley's conversations with D, the ghost, when memories of events that took place during his lifetime more than 50 years ago are jarred loose by the discovery of photographs, journals and other items.

That story contributes to Trace Memory's creepy atmosphere and sense of mystery. The game embarks on its slowly revealed trail of suspense in late September.




Who are you?
NINTENDO
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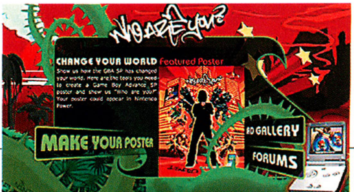
THE TANOOKI TAKES IT

Tony Solary's imaginative Tanooki-suited take on Super Mario Bros. 3 is the winning entry for Nintendo.com's Change Your World design contest. Tony's design embodies the spirit of Nintendo's GBA SP advertising campaigns, which portray the immersive nature of handheld gaming.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Show us how the GBA SP has changed your world. Here are the tools you need to create a Game Boy Advance SP poster and show us "Who are you?" Your poster could appear in Nintendo Power.

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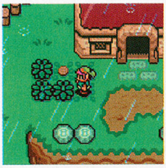
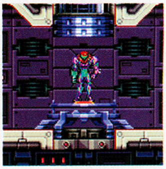
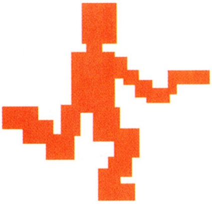
2-D OR NOT 2-D





Once upon a time, side-scrollers and hand-drawn graphics ruled the land. Are those days over? Or is there hope for a 2-D renaissance?

By Steve Thomason



A Matter of Perspective

Long before the days of polygons and bump-mapping, video games originated in two dimensions. Primitive sprites that were supposed to represent invading aliens or malicious centipedes required a bit of help from the player's imagination, but they were enough to ensnare the world in a compelling new form of entertainment. As the technology advanced, 2-D graphics evolved from basic shapes and indistinct blobs to characters with real style and personality. More importantly, the advances allowed for more varied types of gameplay. By the time the 8-bit home consoles rolled around (led by the Nintendo Entertainment System), developers could create entire worlds for the player to explore. Instead of gobbling dots in a static maze, you were traveling fantastic lands on your quest to save the princess. As new genres were introduced, video games became more engrossing. You no longer felt like you were merely maneuvering an avatar in a simple parlor game; you were absorbed in Hyrule, battling the forces of evil.

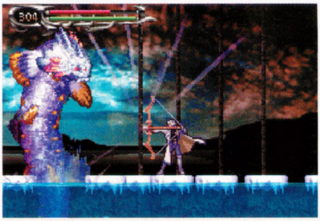
With the Super NES and other 16-bit systems came greater detail and more-colorful art. Though developers were still working with genres established during the 8-bit era, the added horsepower opened new possibilities within those genres. Platformers got faster (Sonic the Hedgehog), adventures more immersive (Super Metroid) and RPGs more epic (Final Fantasy III). The changes weren't revolutionary, but they were significant enough to make things feel new and exciting. Characters were better-animated, bosses grew to massive proportions and multiscrolling backgrounds gave the environments a real sense of depth. The improved visual fidelity also allowed for more-cinematic expression, giving developers the means to tell better stories. The craft of 2-D gaming was invented in the 8-bit days, but it was honed during the 16-bit era.

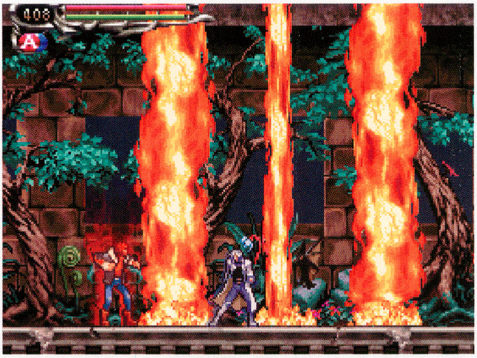
In the hardware generation that followed, we got only a brief glimpse of the new machines' 2-D capabilities. Titles like Castlevania: Symphony of the Night boasted such intricate detail that each scene was like a painting. The technology had finally reached a point where the artist's vision could be realized on the television screen without compromise. But most publishers and

Compelling stories became possible on the Super NES.

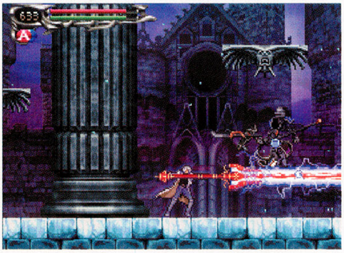
CASTLEVANIA: DAWN OF SORROW

No game demonstrates the DS's potential for hand-drawn graphics as well as Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow. When asked his opinion of the hardware, director Koji Igarashi said, "I thought it was high-spec for multiscrolls, and it's possible to show lots of enemies onscreen. Overall, I was quite satisfied."





If you think the game looks good in screenshots, wait until you see it in motion. The animation and parallax rival that of the PlayStation's Castlevania: Symphony of the Night.



One thing that works much better in 2-D than in 3-D: huge freakin' weapons. In a side-scroller, you don't have to worry about them obscuring your view.

developers turned their sights to the emerging popularity of 3-D. The fatal blow for 2-D games on home consoles came during the holiday season of 1996. That year, the marquee title from each of the major hardware manufacturers—Super Mario 64 for the Nintendo 64, Crash Bandicoot for the Sony PlayStation and NiGHTS into Dreams for the Sega Saturn—was intended to prove the 3-D superiority of their respective machines. The console wars had been couched in terms of 3-D, and that soon became the only type of game that companies were interested in publishing. There was a stigma attached to 2-D games; they were largely viewed as antiquated and demonstrative of a system's weakness. (Sony even went so far as to prohibit many 2-D titles from appearing on its console.)

CRASH
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OPTIONS

Crash Bandicoot: one of the parties responsible for killing 2-D.

Dimensional Rift

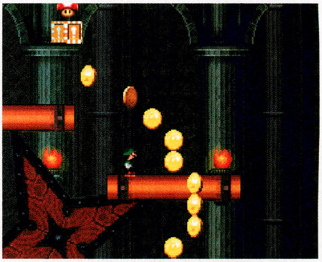
Many gamers, however (especially those weaned on the likes of Super Mario World and Golden Axe), feel that 2-D games still have a lot to offer. And so do some developers. "2-D gaming can provide such great game design—games with definite and solid gameplay," opines Castlevania producer Koji Igarashi, one of 2-D's most vocal proponents. "From a presentation standpoint, it may lack what 3-D can do, but let me yell once again, what games need are fun and exciting elements! 2-D games offer these things!"

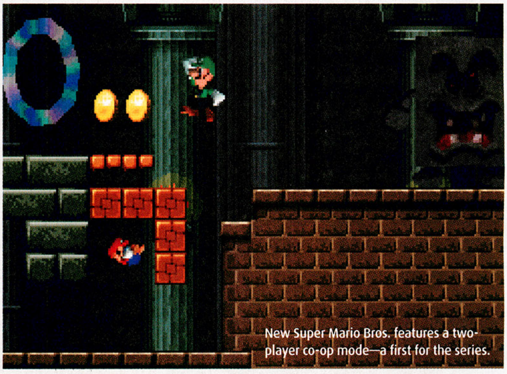
> **"Let me yell once again, what games need are fun and exciting elements! 2-D games offer these things!"**
>
> —Koji Igarashi

It's doubtful that even the staunchest 2-D advocate would ever swear off 3-D games entirely; The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time is every bit as magical as its 2-D counterparts. But there are certain things that 2-D does better. "The big difference between movies and games is that you are constantly interacting with a game and having successes and failures," says the father of Sonic the Hedgehog, Yuji Naka. "That sense of success and failure is what makes a game exciting, and it's more vague in 3-D. I think the distinction is clearer in a 2-D environment." Masato Maegawa, president of Treasure (Gunstar Heroes, Astro Boy: Omega Factor),

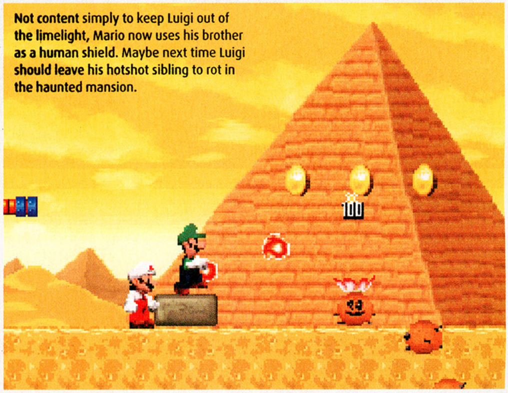
NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.

It's been years since we last saw Mario in an all-new side-scroller, and it looks like Nintendo's been saving up lots of ideas. New Super Mario Bros. retains that classic Mario feel, but introduces all sorts of new visual tricks and gameplay elements. Who better than the king of platforming to show that the classic genre can still offer something fresh and different?





New Super Mario Bros. features a two-player co-op mode—a first for the series.



Not content simply to keep Luigi out of the limelight, Mario now uses his brother as a human shield. Maybe next time Luigi should leave his hotshot sibling to rot in the haunted mansion.

offers a more concrete example: "For action and shooting titles, it is easier to establish solid gameplay in 2-D than in 3-D. As 2-D collision detections are more precise, you can build games that have easy-to-understand action. You can also take advantage of a wide variety of visual styles, such as anime and exaggerated expressions." Though 3-D graphics have come a long way in portraying character and emotion, hand-drawn graphics still offer a certain beauty and intricacy that's just not possible with polygons. It's the same reason classical paintings continue to inspire people in the age of advanced computer graphics.

So why are 2-D games still MIA on home consoles now that the "newness" of 3-D has worn off? The widely accepted answer seems to be that 2-D doesn't sell; that the majority of consumers view it as inherently inferior to 3-D. But is there any proof to support those theories? 2-D games continue to thrive on the GBA, though some might attribute that to inherent differences in the portable market (i.e., 3-D games usually look like poo on the handheld). Yet most of the quality 2-D releases on consoles over the past decade have also fared relatively well. Sales for the hand-drawn Castlevania: Symphony of the Night exceeded those for the the latest 3-D installment of the series by more than 100,000 units. And more recently, side-scroller Viewtiful Joe sold well enough to spawn numerous sequels. Clearly there's still an audience for well-executed 2-D games.

Nevertheless, developers feel constant pressure to take advantage of the latest advancements in technology. As Sonic Rush director Akinori Nishiyama puts it: "Essentially, creators should have a wide range of expressions available to them, regardless of hardware considerations. And gamers should also have the freedom to choose the type of game they want to play on any piece of hardware. However, I believe there are currently many voices demanding realism and cinematic expressions that are preventing the return of side-scrollers. Personally, it makes me sad at times to think that the popularity of side-scrollers has declined, and it seems that the pure entertainment aspect of games has become less important."

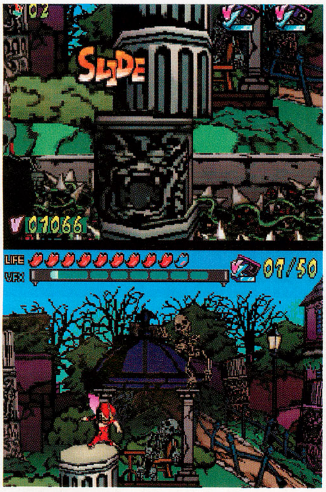
> **"In the age of evolving technology, and with new systems on the horizon, it's becoming more difficult to create new and fresh 2-D games."**
>
> —Atsushi Inaba

Igarashi offers another, somewhat counterintuitive explanation for the dearth of 2-D games on consoles. "I'm always thinking about making a hand-drawn game for home systems," admits the Castlevania producer. "But because they depict very minute details, it would require really advanced graphics. From a cost-performance standpoint, it doesn't make sense. It would require a lot of time and money to create all that art. When development costs get too high, then it doesn't make for good business. Personally, I would love to do hand-drawn games on consoles, but it has to balance out."

Whatever the reasons, many believe 2-D games will remain relatively scarce on home consoles for the time being. "Occasionally, developers may express fresh and innovative ideas in 2-D, or they may create 2-D games using different approaches," predicts Inaba. "However, from here on, I believe that only a small percentage of games will be created in 2-D."

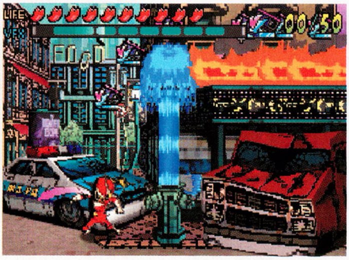
VIEWTIFUL JOE DS

As the GCN games do, Viewtiful Joe DS combines 2-D gameplay with 3-D graphics, a technique referred to in some circles (the ones where all the cool kids hang out) as 2.5-D. Despite series creator Atsushi Inaba's feeling that "In the age of technology, and with new systems on the horizon, it's becoming more difficult to create new and fresh 2-D games," Joe's VFX antics prove that innovation and 2-D can still go hand-in-hand. And though the graphics are constructed of polygons, the side-scrolling perspective uses them to create a unique visual style possible only in 2-D.



With the dual screens, Viewtiful Joe can present two different views of the action.

Joe rushes to the rescue of 2-D gaming. Henshin-a-go-go, baby!



The touch screen opens new possibilities for 2-D gameplay. Here, you have to drag the stylus across the screen to split the "scene" and direct the water toward the flames.

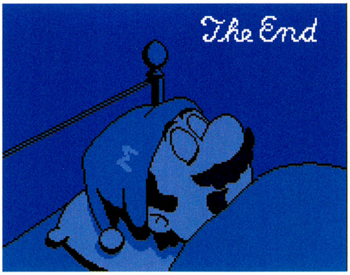
The Next Level

Fortunately, 2-D still has a home on the GBA with such upcoming releases as Gunstar Super Heroes and Donkey Kong Country 3. And the future looks even brighter on the DS. With graphical capabilities on par with the 32- and 64-bit consoles, the dual-screened portable is poised to finally deliver the evolution of 2-D games that was denied us in 1996. Titles like Sonic Rush and New Super Mario Bros. (see the sidebars) go above and beyond what we've seen before, proving there's still plenty of life left in gaming's oldest artform.

Indeed, Game Arts president Takeshi Miyaji sees this as a unique opportunity to promote innovation throughout all areas of game development. "You can focus on gameplay with 2-D," explains the head of the company behind the hand-drawn Lunar series. "However, that isn't possible with 3-D games because you have to spend so much time on graphics rather than gameplay. I think a good approach would be to try new game systems or gameplay ideas in 2-D with the DS, then if those new ideas succeed, work on a big-budget 3-D game based on the results from the 2-D version." (Could Miyaji be hinting at the company's plans for the future of the Lunar franchise?)

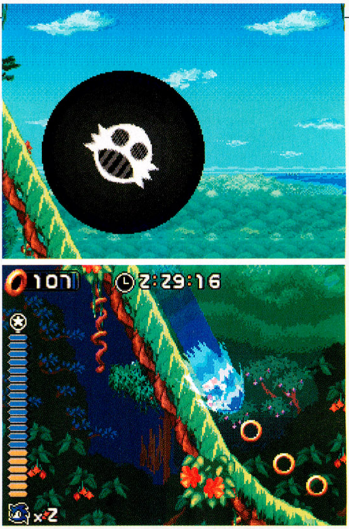
> **"There's a chance that we'll see more 2-D games as their positive traits are rediscovered with the increase in classic remakes."**
>
> –Masato Maegawa

And perhaps not all hope is lost for a 2-D resurgence on home consoles. As Maegawa points out, "There's a chance that we'll see more 2-D games as their positive traits are rediscovered with the increase in classic remakes." Those chances could be bolstered by the Revolution's "Virtual Console" capabilities as a new audience plays titles like Chrono Trigger, Yoshi's Island and A Link to the Past for the first time. A gamer can dream, anyway.



SONIC RUSH

Sonic belongs in 2-D. Though Sega's beloved blue hedgehog has starred in some wonderful 3-D adventures, Sonic Rush reminds us why his high-speed brand of platforming works better when he's running from left to right: there are no camera problems to worry about and the developers can design tighter levels to better deliver that trademark sense of speed. Above all else, controlling Sonic just feels better in 2-D.



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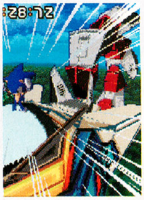
Sonic Rush is the best-looking game in the series to date. With such stunning hand-drawn backdrops, it's almost a shame they whiz by so fast.



Sonic Rush's bosses are in 3-D, thus they must be destroyed.

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4. I haven't read the article yet, but I intend to read it.

D. Did you like this month's Trace Memory article, and how did it impact your interest in the game? (Choose one.)
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2. I liked seeing screenshots and art from the game in particular.
3. I'm interested in the game, but I didn't like the article.
4. I read the article, but I'm not interested in the game.
5. I didn't read the article.

E. Which of the statements most closely reflects your feelings about the Incredible Hulk bosses article?
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2. I liked reading about the strategies, but I don't have the game.
3. Giving away boss strategies spoils the game. You should be ashamed of yourselves.
4. I didn't read the article.

F. What type of coverage are you most looking forward to reading about The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess?
1. More Inside Zelda stories from the development team
2. More previews of the game
3. A critical review of the finished game
4. Game strategies once the game is released
5. I'm not looking forward to more coverage.

G. Which games in the 2-D Games feature interest you most?
1. Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow
2. New Super Mario Bros.
3. Sonic Rush
4. Donkey Kong Country 3
5. Viewtiful Joe DS

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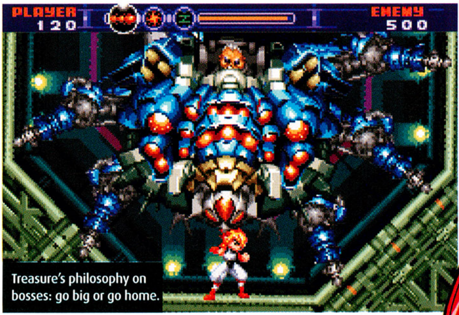
HERO WORSHIP

Treasure returns to its roots with **Gunstar Super Heroes** and delivers an explosive sequel to one of the greatest action games of all time.

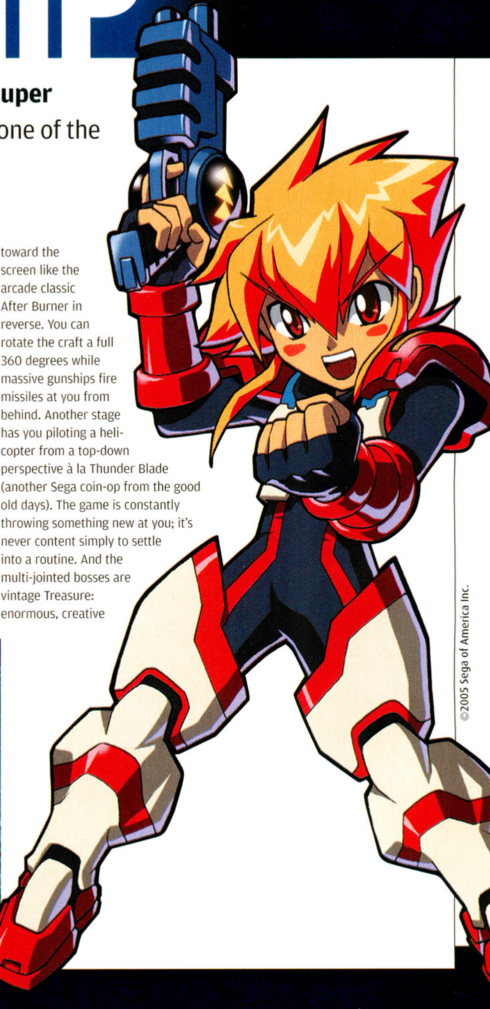
By Steve Thomason

For all their great accomplishments over the years, it would appear the folks at Treasure still feel most at home in the Gunstar universe. The original Gunstar Heroes for the Sega Genesis was the company's first-ever title, and is widely considered one of the greatest action games on a platform renowned for them. With the long-awaited follow-up, the development team (which includes six of the seven staff members who worked on the first game) rekindles that legacy with palpable enthusiasm, pushing the GBA to its limits and delivering an action romp the likes of which we've never seen on the handheld. Last year's phenomenal Astro Boy: Omega Factor was just a warm-up.

Like its 1993 predecessor, Gunstar Super Heroes features two playable characters named Red and Blue. As the defenders of Earth, the duo is charged with preventing an evil empire from reviving the God of Ruin. It's not the most original premise, to be sure, but Treasure's designers have never been about telling compelling stories. They specialize in blowing stuff up, and with Gunstar Super Heroes, they're in rare form. The pace is relentless, hurtling you from one awe-inspiring action piece to the next. There's no real strategy or technique to speak of—just classic twitch gameplay that will leave you with a pair of well-earned sore thumbs. Though the game is primarily a 2-D side-scroller, the stages boast remarkable variety. In one, you stand atop your ship as it scales toward the screen like the arcade classic After Burner in reverse. You can rotate the craft a full 360 degrees while massive gunships fire missiles at you from behind. Another stage has you piloting a helicopter from a top-down perspective à la Thunder Blade (another Sega coin-op from the good old days). The game is constantly throwing something new at you; it's never content simply to settle into a routine. And the multi-jointed bosses are vintage Treasure: enormous, creative



Treasure's philosophy on bosses: go big or go home.



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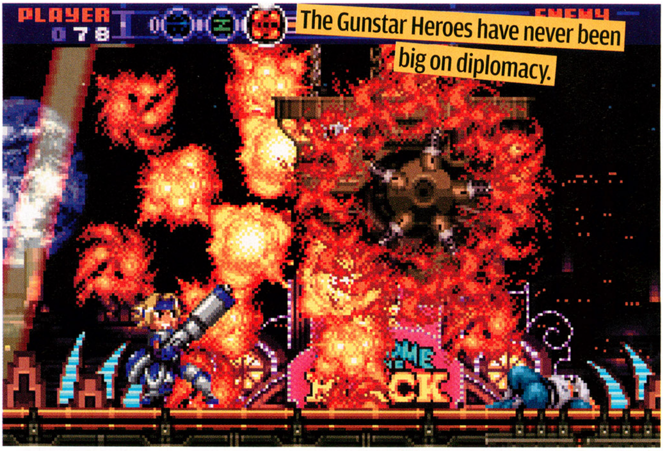
and tough as nails. One of the most memorable encounters pits you against a giant robot that morphs into seven different forms (including a 20-foot-tall soccer player) as it chases you through a mine shaft.

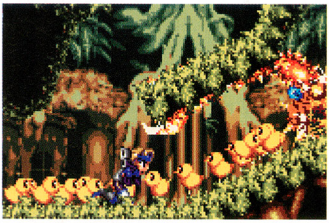
Conspicuously absent is the ability to pick up and combine weapons as in the previous game. Instead, you carry the same three firearms—Rapid, Homing and Explosive—at all times. Each is equipped with a special attack bar that charges as you defeat enemies. When the bar is full, you can unleash a massive blast that comes in especially handy during some of the game's tensest moments.

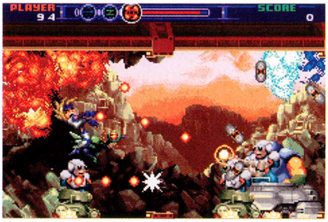
In typical Treasure fashion, the game's visuals put most other titles on the platform to shame. The screen is constantly filled with massive sprites and even bigger explosions, and most stages boast multiple layers of independently scrolling backgrounds. What's even more impressive is that everything moves with unwavering fluidity; during our play test, we didn't experience a single hint of slowdown. It proves that the GBA hardware can still impress in the right hands.

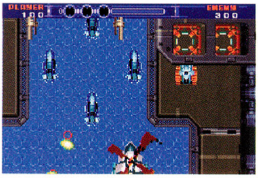
So will the game live up to fans' lofty expectations? Based on what we've played so far, the answer is an emphatic "yes." Despite the changes to the weapon system and the lack of a two-player co-op mode, Gunstar Super Heroes deftly captures the spirit of the original, something Treasure's other recent sequel, Advance Guardian Heroes, couldn't quite manage. If you've played the first game, Treasure probably had you at hello. Everyone else should do themselves a favor and keep a close eye on this one leading to its October release.

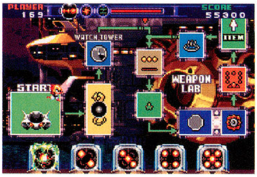


The Gunstar Heroes have never been big on diplomacy.







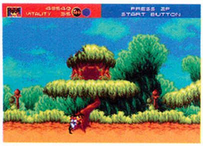


One of the latter stages is structured like a board game. You roll a die, and each panel thrusts you into a different skirmish or boss encounter.

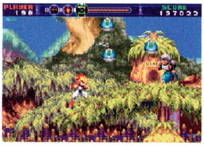
A STAR IS REBORN

In addition to making numerous old-school Sega references, Gunstar Super Heroes pays frequent homage to the original Gunstar. As you can see below, however, the returning levels and bosses have gotten a dramatic makeover.

Gunstar Heroes

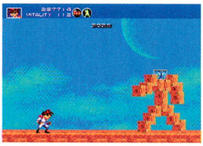


Gunstar Super Heroes

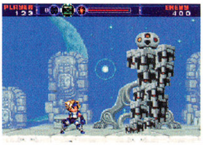


Though you'll revisit a number of locales from the first game, you'll barely recognize them thanks to the huge boost in detail.

Gunstar Heroes



Gunstar Super Heroes



All of the returning bosses are much more imposing than they were on the Genesis. The "Dice Man" above is now 100% less dorky-looking.

HULK'S BOSSES NEED A BEATING

Bad breath won't do it. Quick reflexes get you only halfway. Mangle their grills with the 18 most aggro moves.

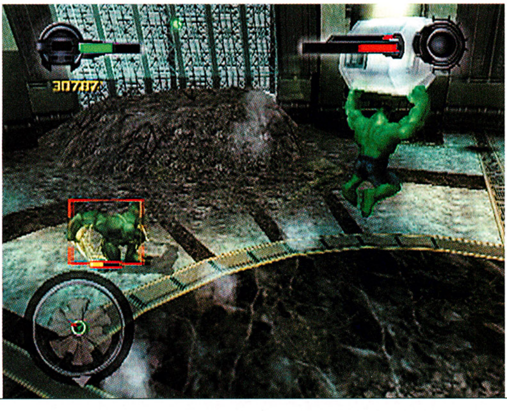
TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

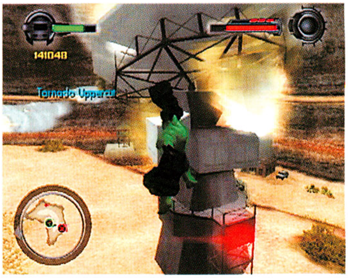
By Steven Grimm

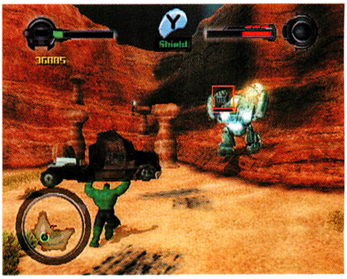
The angrier the Hulk gets, the stronger he grows. But the angier you get, the more likely it is that you'll just trash your room. So do yourself a big favor and take the pressure off with a few tips for each of the hardest boss battles in The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction. Since you can purchase up to 150 moves over the course of the game, which ones you buy—and when—are key to survival.

1 THE ABOMINATION

Many boss fights play out like cage matches, so it's no surprise to see a classic wrestling trick, the chair to the head, show up in your first skirmish with the jade jerk. He'll dash relentlessly to get at your throat, so lock on to him, circle and use the **Running Grab** to grab fuel tanks while moving. Don't stop—use the **Double Fist Toss** (on-the-go throws) to launch the tanks at your target. When he leaps on the junk pile and pulls up a fuel barrel, throw any object at him—he'll be caught in a big blast. When Abomination doubles over in pain, use the moves to grab the beast quickly and pitch him against the massive fuel chambers. That should finish him off.







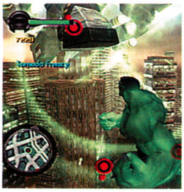
2 HULKBUSTER PROTOTYPE

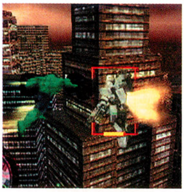
If the megamech calls in soldiers, you'll be viciously ambushed, so take down the transmission dishes. [Recycle cars into **Steel Fists** and use two **Tornado Uppercuts** to shatter each dish]. If you're fast, you can crush all three before the mech dials its first 911. Lock on to its missile-firing shoulderpads and hurl trucks and boulders—several fully charged throws should do in each one. As you perform dodging leaps, scraping up energy for the occasional **Critical Atomic Slam**, chip away at its health with an **Air Stomp** followed by heel-nipping **Straight Dashes.**

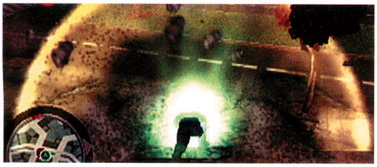
The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction interactive game ©2005 Universal Interactive, Inc. All rights reserved. Marvel, The Incredible Hulk and all related comic book characters: TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

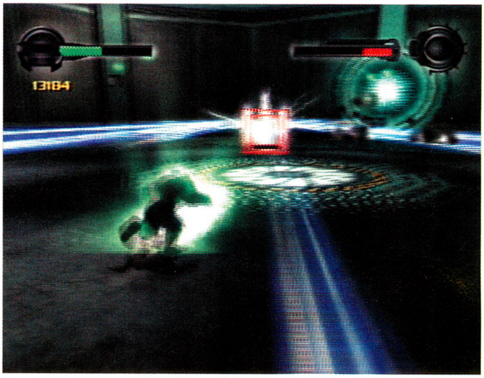
3 CHIEF COMBAT WARDEN

During the cross-town rampage that leads to the meched-up Chief Combat Warden, practice the **Tornado Frenzy** on armored soldiers—you'll get the timing down pat before you use it on the grunts' much-faster boss. After you hurt him enough in your first encounter, the warden will fly across the city, flitting along a series of well-guarded rooftops. Bash the soldiers on each roof to gain enough energy for your final warden encounter in a city park, where he's surrounded by tanks. Run into their midst and throw the field into chaos with a **Critical Atomic Slam**, then hurl crippled tanks into less-damaged tanks. When they're all down for the count, use their burnt-out husks as projectiles against the warden himself.



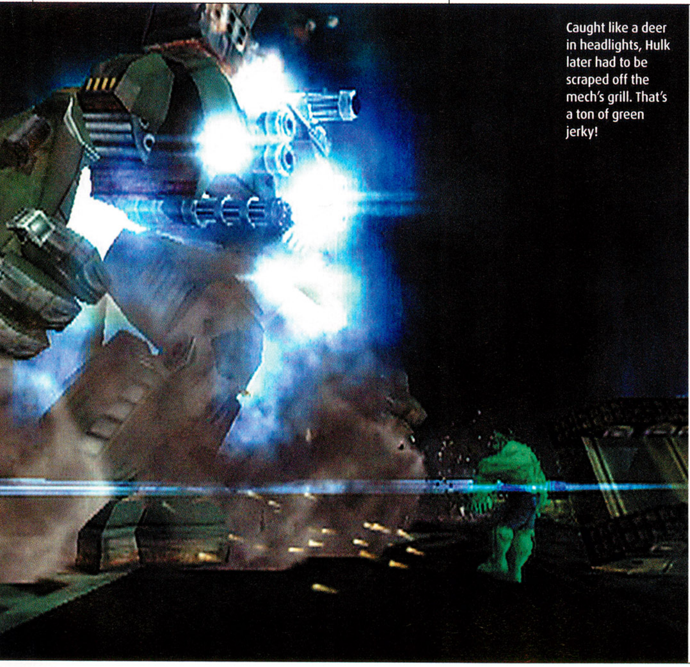






4 MERCY

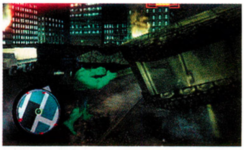
Wildly reinterpreted from the classic Hulk era as "Pink meets Matrix," Mercy uses sadistic moves on the Hulk, such as pinning his hands back with telekinetic force, then kicking the crap out of him. She'll also scan the floor with lasers that punch him in the gut and—late in the battle—she'll hurl canisters around the room. Amid all the insanity, you'll need to land quick, powerful blows on Mercy before she teleports away. At this point in the game, the **Dashing Uppercut** fits the bill best. It lets you dash defensively as you race directly toward her, then pull off the potent uppercut at ground zero. If Mercy isn't in full-on crazy-lady mode, stop the dash to deliver a **Tornado Uppercut** instead.

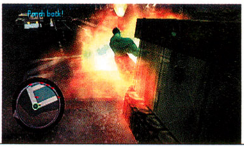


Caught like a deer in headlights, Hulk later had to be scraped off the mech's grill. That's a ton of green jerky!

5 GENERAL ROSS

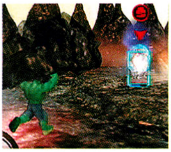
You can't start the Turning Point mission until you've bought the **Hammer Toss**—that's a good sign that the tank-throwing move is key for busting General Ross. Don't be distracted by all the other Hulk moves you can pull off by this point. Since Ross's improved Hulkbuster will rebuff direct attacks with a force field, fire volleys of homing missiles at you and slice through the air with a building-obliterating laser, there's just no time to get fancy. Use buildings for cover (the **Air Dash** will get you around corners fast in a pinch), and focus on finding tanks to swing and hurl at the mech. With the **Missile Punchback** ability, you'll automatically bat missiles back at their sources while you're swinging away.

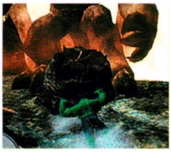


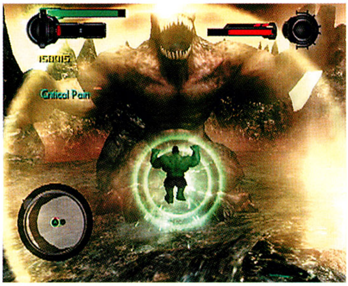


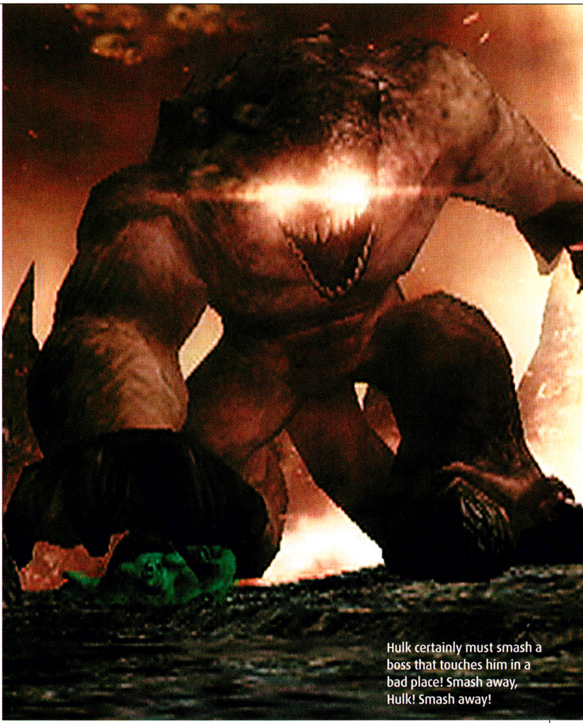
6 DEVIL HULK

Longtime Hulk fans know that the Devil Hulk—evil incarnate—has been trying to break free from Bruce Banner's psyche for years. The rest of us will just want to crush a boss that makes our flesh crawl by saying, "What I do . . . I do out of love for you, child!" First, lure Devil Hulk up from his pit (where he's invulnerable) by smashing the three crystals on its rim. The **Shockwave Smash Repeater** is ideal, since it sends seismic waves to shatter the crystals out of reach of the Devil Hulk's hungry mouth and grasping hands. Each crystal will drop energy. Collect it all to gain enough juice to pull a few **Critical Pain** strikes. Use the move, which lets Hulk serve as a missile, to blast a whole bar off the creature's health once he emerges. He'll return to the pit—repeat the sequence until he's defeated.





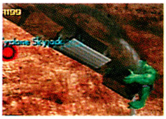


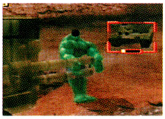


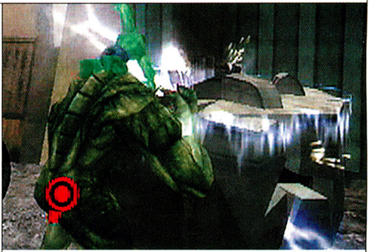
Hulk certainly must smash a boss that touches him in a bad place! Smash away, Hulk! Smash away!

7 COMBAT WARDEN & THE ABOMINATION

Tanks, helicopters and missile-launching trucks are the terrors in this two-part boss mission—not the bosses themselves. As you head through the canyon to meet the Combat Warden at the Vault HQ and as you chase the Abomination back the way you came, you'll face heavy ambushes—no time for multibutton combos. Thin the crowds by using the **Air Cannonball** to blast the missile trucks first; then use the same move against passing helicopters. Follow up immediately with a **Cyclone Skyjacking**, which will down a hawk in a hurry. Pit tank against tank with the **Hammer Toss**. When the rubble clears, scavenge trucks using the **Missile Pack** weaponization, which gives you several powerful missiles that you should save for taking on the bosses, since the missile trucks are few and far between during the battle.

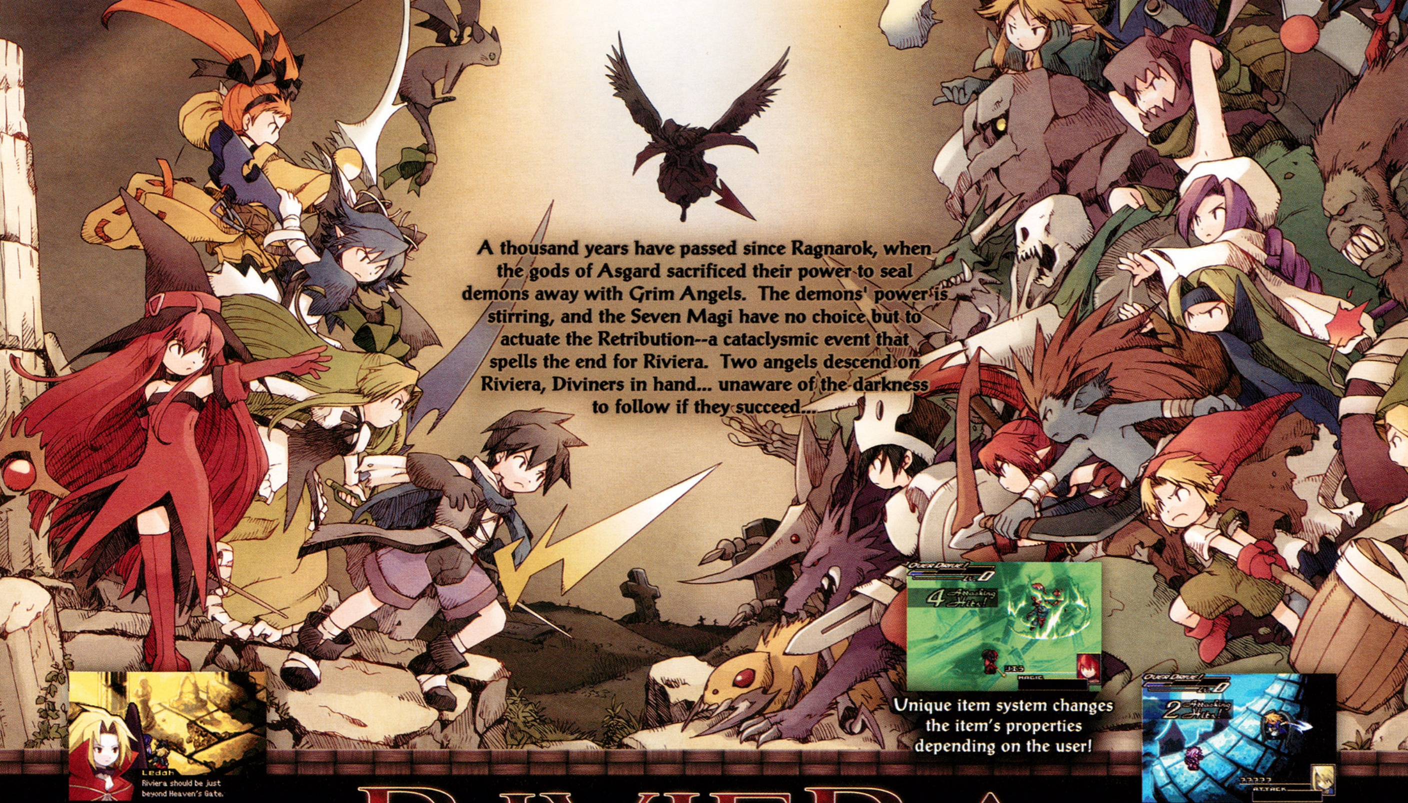






8 THE ABOMINATION

For the final face-off, you'll have to beat the boss before he tears out four dam generators, but there's little power to collect for big moves. Don't take out jets to sap power; they sometimes help you gun down your foe. When he turns his back as he goes for a generator, blast him with an **Air Cannonball**, followed by skull smashes while riding his back—you'll need **Hitchhike**. Use **Double Air Dashes** to escape harm when he pulls up a generator and throws it at you. When the boss is in pursuit, use air dashes to reach a truck, then grab it and zoom away. Yes, we know. With 150 moves at your disposal, it's soooo old-school to be throwing trucks—but it's a surefire way to wear down a juggernaut who's always breathing down your neck.


OVER DRIVE!
4 Attacking Hits!
MAGIC
OVER DRIVE!
2 Attacking Hits!
ATTACK

A thousand years have passed since Ragnarok, when the gods of Asgard sacrificed their power to seal demons away with Grim Angels. The demons' power is stirring, and the Seven Magi have no choice but to actuate the Retribution--a cataclysmic event that spells the end for Riviera. Two angels descend on Riviera, Diviners in hand... unaware of the darkness to follow if they succeed...

Ledah
Riviera should be just beyond Heaven's Gate.

Branching paths of adventure lead to multiple endings!

Unique item system changes the item's properties depending on the user!

A beautiful fantasy world drawn in lush detail!

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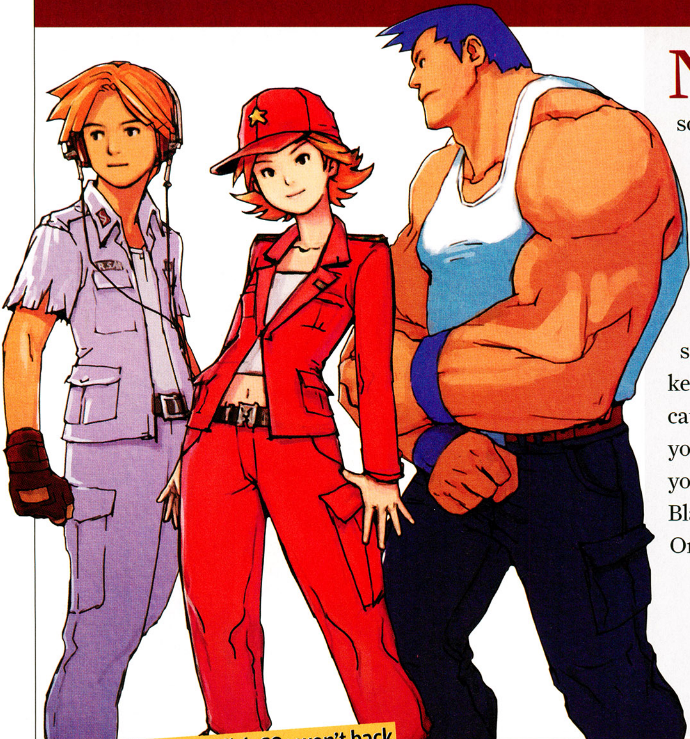
WAR-TORN?

We've got your back with Advance Wars: Dual Strike strategies that will send your enemies crawling back under the rock they came from.

By Andy Myers



Omega Land's stylish COs won't back down from a fight—especially against the thugs of the Black Hole Army.

New COs, new units and some dope dual-screen action—Advance Wars: Dual Strike takes turn-based strategy to great heights on Nintendo DS. We can't walk you through all of the game's 28 missions in seven pages, but we've broken down the game into four categories that will provide you with the ammunition you'll need to kick some Black Hole butt and save Omega Land!

LET NP BE YOUR GUIDE

Advance Wars: Dual Strike is massive, and though we've crammed as much strategy into the following pages as humanly possible, there's more where that came from. Get the official player's guide for a mission-by-mission walk-through and about 3 billion charts to guide you through the game.

visit www.advancewars.com

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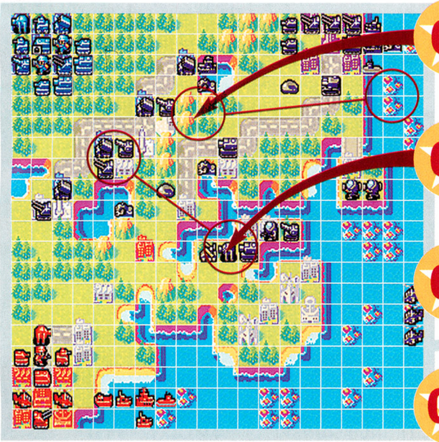
FOUR PRINCIPLES FROM THE WAR ROOM

Despite its intuitive nature, Advance Wars: Dual Strike is a complex new experience, even if you're an Advance Wars pro. The first three strategies outlined here deal with terrain types, unit information and CO selection with an eye toward Tag Battles. The last provides general survival tips for the battlefield.



01 UNDERSTAND THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ALL TYPES OF TERRAIN.
PAGE 83

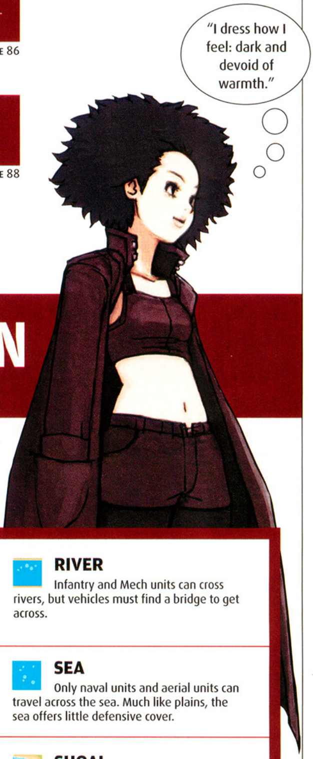
02 LEARN THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF EVERY UNIT IN THE GAME, OLD AND NEW.
PAGE 84

03 KNOW YOUR COMMANDING OFFICERS AND TAKE THE ADVANTAGE IN TAG BATTLES.
PAGE 86

04 PUT YOUR INTEL INTO ACTION WITH 12 TIPS FOR THE BATTLEFIELD.
PAGE 88

Plain
Def
New Funds ----
Infntry 1
Mech 1
Tires 2
Tread 1
Air 1
Oozium 1
Md Tank
Day 25
Move 5
Vision 1
29/50
Cannon
8/8
Veh
Ship
Sub
Machine Gun
Infntry
Veh
Cptr
DAMAGE
75%
Plain
A-Air
10
60
9

Easy to traverse, plains offer little defensive cover.


"I dress how I feel: dark and devoid of warmth."

01 MASTER YOUR DOMAIN

TERRAIN CAN TURN THE TIDE OF WAR.

Whether the fight is on the ground, on the sea or in the air, terrain (in combination with weather) will determine how you should approach each mission. Some COs fare better on certain terrain than others do, but there are a few twists. Olaf, for instance, is unaffected by weather, while Lash can turn terrain effects into firepower bonuses.

BRIDGE & ROAD

Ground forces can move quickly over bridges and roads. Bridges often serve as great choke points to limit the enemy's movement.

PIPELINE & JOINT

No unit can cross over a pipeline, which limits your movement greatly. To get to the other side, destroy a joint to create an opening.

RIVER

Infantry and Mech units can cross rivers, but vehicles must find a bridge to get across.

FOREST

Forests offer a defensive bonus, but they also slow vehicles down. In the Fog of War, units in forests are hidden from enemy view.

PLAINS

Plains slow vehicle movement slightly and offer little defensive cover. Jake performs well on this terrain.

SEA

Only naval units and aerial units can travel across the sea. Much like plains, the sea offers little defensive cover.

MOUNTAIN

Mechs and Infantry are the only ground units that can cross mountains, and the terrain offers a great defensive bonus.

REEF

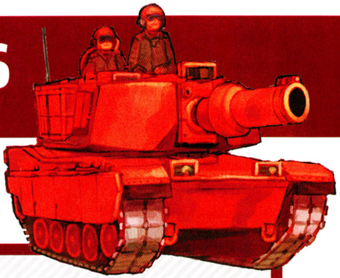
When the Fog of War is active, naval units can use reefs to remain unseen by enemy units.

SHOAL

Shoals can be crossed by ground units, and serve as loading spots for Landers.

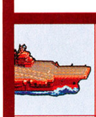
02 MEASURE YOUR UNITS

WHAT WORKS, WHAT DOESN'T



NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

One of AWDS's greatest offerings is its group of seven powerful new units. Each has strengths and weaknesses that will drastically affect your performance in battle. And it's not as simple as black and white—a unit can be strong against another unit while also being vulnerable to it.



AIRCRAFT CARRIER ●

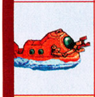
Aircraft Carriers are the priciest units in the game. They can shelter and resupply up to two air units at a time, and can attack enemy air units at an extremely long range. Keep them away from the coast—they are vulnerable to some ground units.

⊕ STRONG AGAINST

- All Air Units

⊖ WEAK AGAINST

- Battleships
- Bombers
- Rocket Launchers
- Submarines



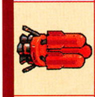
BLACK BOAT ●

The main function of Black Boats is to repair and resupply other units, but they can also serve as transports for Infantry and Mech units. Though they cannot attack, their presence can have a big impact on a battle.

Units such as Black Boats, Black Bombs and Piperunners will be unavailable until you capture certain buildings during your campaign.

⊖ WEAK AGAINST

- Battleships
- Bombers
- Rocket Launchers
- Submarines



BLACK BOMB ●

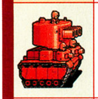
Black Bombs are unmanned units that can be moved and detonated, inflicting damage on any unit within three spaces. They burn fuel fast, but can be resupplied by APCs. Anti-Air units can take out enemy Black Bombs quickly.

⊕ STRONG AGAINST

- All Ground, Air and Sea Units

⊖ WEAK AGAINST

- Anti-Air
- Fighters
- Missile Launchers
- Stealth Fighters



MEGATANK ●

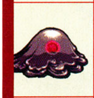
The monstrous Megatank is the most powerful of all land units. It moves slowly, but its armor allows it to take a beating along the way. Megatanks use up fuel and ammo quickly, so keep APCs around for resupply.

⊕ STRONG AGAINST

- All Ground Units

⊖ WEAK AGAINST

- Battleships
- Bombers
- Rocket Launchers
- Stealth Fighters



OOZIUM ●

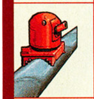
Ooziums move slowly, but can take out anything in their path in one shot. Avoiding them is easy, though Ooziums have a tendency to sneak up on you. To defeat an Oozium without losing a unit, attack it from all four sides on the same turn.

⊕ STRONG AGAINST

- All Ground and Air Units

⊖ WEAK AGAINST

- Anti-Air
- Battle Copters
- Mechs
- Recon



PIPERUNNER ●

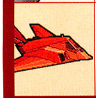
Piperunners can move only along pipes and bases, but their movement range, attack range and firepower are great. Most pipes have joints that you can destroy to limit an enemy Piperunner's movement.

⊕ STRONG AGAINST

- All Ground and Sea Units

⊖ WEAK AGAINST

- Bombers
- MD Tanks
- Megatanks
- Rocket Launchers



STEALTH FIGHTER ●

The Stealth Fighter can inflict heavy damage on almost anything. Most units cannot attack a Stealth Fighter when it is hidden, but hiding burns fuel very fast. Aircraft Carriers can greatly aid Stealth Fighters.

⊕ STRONG AGAINST

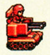
- All Tank Units
- Battle Copters
- Battleships
- Bombers

⊖ WEAK AGAINST

- Anti-Air
- Cruisers
- Fighters
- Missile Launchers

OLDIES BUT GOODIES

The tried and true units of Advance Wars and Advance Wars 2: Black Hole Rising return, with some slight changes. Even if you're familiar with these units, you'll need to know how they stand up against AWDS's seven new ones.



ANTI-AIR ●

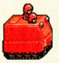
Anti-Air units provide a lot of bang for your buck. The relatively inexpensive ground units can take down any flying unit and wreak havoc on Infantry and Mechs.

⊕ STRONG AGAINST

- All Air Units
- Artillery
- Infantry
- Ooziums

⊖ WEAK AGAINST

- All Tanks
- Artillery
- Rocket Launchers
- Mechs

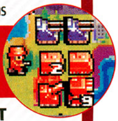


APC ●

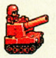
APCs cannot attack, but they are vital for refueling other units and transporting foot soldiers. The short movement range of Mechs makes them almost useless without APCs.

⊖ WEAK AGAINST

- All Ground and Air Units
- Battleships



Due to their affordability, APCs also make great decoys to draw in enemy units.



ARTILLERY ●

Artillery are great second-line units. They cannot attack directly, but if you can draw an enemy unit into their line of fire, you won't be disappointed.

⊕ STRONG AGAINST

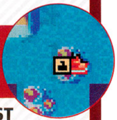
- All Tank Units
- Anti-Air
- Infantry
- Rocket Launchers

⊖ WEAK AGAINST

- All Tank Units
- All Air Units
- Anti-Air
- Mechs

🟢 LAND UNITS 🔵 NAVAL UNITS 🔴 AIR UNITS

		⊕ STRONG AGAINST	⊖ WEAK AGAINST
	BATTLE COPTER 🔴 Battle Copters have a good movement range and are great for taking out less-powerful units (including other Battle Copters). They can find shelter on Aircraft Carriers and Cruisers.	Infantry Tanks Mechs Ooziums	Fighters Cruisers Anti-Air Missile Launchers
	BATTLESHIP 🔵 Battleships boast some nasty firepower, and their long range leaves few places to hide. Surround your Battleships with Cruisers to protect them from enemy subs.	All Ground and Sea Units	Bombers Stealth Fighters Rocket Launchers Submarines
	BOMBER 🔴 The big boys of the sky, Bombers can lay waste to anything below them. Fighters are especially dangerous to Bombers—hide them on Aircraft Carriers for safety.	All Ground and Sea Units	Anti-Air Cruisers Fighters Missile Lauchers
	CRUISER 🔵 Cruisers can serve many purposes. Not only can they provide safe harbor for Battle Copters, but they can do significant damage to Submarines and flying units.	All Air Units Submarines	Artillery Rocket Launchers Battleships
	FIGHTER 🔴 Fighters are limited to attacking only other flying units, but their movement range and attack power make them a great commodity in aerial battles.	All Air Units	Aircraft Carriers Cruisers Anti-Air Missile Launchers
	INFANTRY 🟢 Infantry units are the most disposable in the game, but are very important when capturing buildings. You can also place Infantry on mountains to extend your army's vision in the Fog of War.	Infantry Mechs	All Ground and Air Units Battleships
	LANDER 🔵 Lander units are strictly for transporting ground units across water. Landers can carry two ground units.		All Ground, Air and Sea Units
	MECH 🟢 Mechs have enough firepower to hold their own against small vehicles, but their movement range is short. Mountains do not affect Mechs' movement.	Infantry Tanks Mechs Artillery	All Ground and Air Units Battleships
	MEDIUM TANK 🟢 The midsized tanks of AWDS have a decent movement range and are effective against most ground units. They make a great middle-of-the-road offensive solution on the ground.	Anti-Air Tanks Artillery Ooziums	Bombers Megatanks Neotanks Rocket Launchers
	MISSILE LAUNCHER 🟢 Missile Launchers can attack only flying units, but they can easily blow anything out of the sky. Keep them protected by surrounding them with ground units.	All Air Units	All Ground and Air Units Battleships
	NEOTANK 🟢 Neotanks are the most powerful ground units next to Megatanks. Use Neotanks to plow through groups of enemies, but stay out of range of Artillery and Rocket Launchers.	Anti-Air Tanks Medium Tanks Ooziums	Bombers Megatanks Artillery Rocket Launchers
	RECON 🟢 Recon units are weak but have great movement and vision range. They are especially useful in the Fog of War to expose hidden enemy positions.	Artillery Ooziums Infantry & Mechs Rocket Launchers	All Ground and Air Units Battleships
	ROCKET LAUNCHER 🟢 Rocket Launchers can be especially deadly when your COs perform a Dual Strike, allowing you to move them into position and fire on any ground or sea unit.	All Ground and Sea Units	All Ground and Air Units Battleships
	SUBMARINE 🔵 Submarines are vulnerable when on the surface, but once they dive, very few units can touch them. Watch their fuel closely, especially when they're underwater.	Aircraft Carriers Landers Battleships	Battleships Cruisers Bombers
	TANK 🟢 Tanks are small, but they're also cheap. Move them around in hordes to clear paths for the bigger guns and to protect vulnerable ground units.	Anti-Air Infantry & Mechs Artillery Recons	All Other Tanks All Air Units Artillery Rocket Launchers
	TRANSPORT COPTER 🔴 Transport Copters are great for moving Infantry or Mechs quickly. If Transport Copters are in danger, they and their cargo can be loaded onto Cruisers or Aircraft Carriers.		All Ground, Air and Sea Units

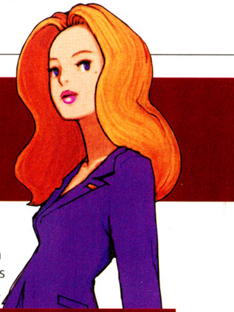


Park your naval units on reefs when possible to gain extra defensive cover.

03

INCREASE CO KNOW-HOW

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE VERY UGLY

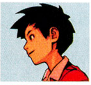


TAG 101

As if a CO's individual powers aren't enough to chew on, AWDS lets you put two COs in charge of the same army. When both of their meters are completely full, you can initiate a Tag Battle, which uses each CO's Super CO Power and allows them both to move on the same day. Tagging allows COs to play off each other's individual strengths and weaknesses.

ADDER ●

Adder's Super CO Power increases each unit's movement by two. He should always be assigned to slot 1 when tagging—otherwise, you won't receive the percentage bonus listed on the chart on the next page.



ANDY ●

Andy's Super CO Power heals all units while increasing their firepower and movement. When tagging with Andy, it's best to let his partner go first—that way, he'll heal whatever damage his allies received in the first wave.

COLIN ●

Colin is not as powerful as most, but he can build units for less money. His Super CO Power boosts his attack. It's usually best to let Colin go first when tagging.

DRAKE ●

Drake's Super CO Power, Typhoon, will cause it to rain for one day in addition to damaging enemy units and reducing their fuel. It's best to let Drake's partner initiate the tag to avoid the rain for a round.

EAGLE ●

Lightning Strike, Eagle's Super CO Power, allows all non-Infantry units to attack twice. To utilize his power, only tag on a day in which Eagle goes first, and only after he's finished his turn. That way, he'll get another turn before you swap him out.

FLAK ●

Flak is a powerhouse in the attack department, but his Super CO Power is hit or miss. In a tagging situation, let Flak go first, and have him tag with a more-consistent CO like Jake who can finish the job well.

GRIMM ●

Grimm is a powerful CO, but his defense is weak. Let Grimm strike first in a tag, and pair him up with a CO that has healing powers. Grimm also fights well alongside the defense-oriented CO Javier.

GRIT ●

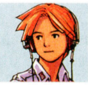
Grit's long-range abilities make him a good match with a CO that excels in direct combat. Let Grit go first in a Tag Battle—he makes long-range weapons attack two spaces farther than normal.

HACHI ●

Use Hachi first in a Tag Battle and have him use his Super CO Power to create a ton of inexpensive units. Pair him with Kanbei or another powerhouse that can quickly take advantage of the new units and catch the enemy off guard.

HAWKE ●

Hawke will join the good side partway through your first Campaign-mode run. Let his tagging partner go first, then switch to Hawke—his Super CO Power will damage enemy units by 2 HP and heal allied units by 2 HP.



JAKE ●

Jake's Super CO Power increases units' movement and firing range. Jake is a great closer when tagging. Pair him with Jess—she can move in first and do some serious damage, and the combination will earn the pair a bonus.

JAVIER ●

Javier's got great communication skills. Use him on levels with a lot of Com Towers, and let him go second in a Tag Battle—his defense will be so high that enemy units will do very little damage.

JESS ●

In addition to increasing movement range and attack power, Jess's Super CO Power replenishes your units' ammo and fuel. She'll fight especially well in Mission 24 against Drake, whose Super CO Power lowers your units' fuel level.

JUGGER ●

Like Flak's, Jugger's attack power is offset by the randomness of his hit rate. Pair him up with a more-consistent unit when tagging. Kindle is a good choice.

KANBEI ●

Kanbei's Super CO Power not only increases attack and defense, but doubles units' firepower when they're counterattacking. Use Kanbei last in a Tag Battle—enemy units will be in for a surprise on the next turn.

KINDLE ●

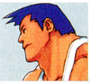
Kindle is a true powermonger—her Super CO Power increases units' attack power depending on how many buildings they control. Also, units parked on bases will earn a huge increase to attack power.

KOAL ●

Koal's CO Power meter grows very fast, and his Super CO Power increases units' movement range, as well as the firepower of units on roads. Koal pairs well with both Adder and Kindle.

LASH ●

Lash performs well on maps with terrain effects. Have her go first in a Tag Battle to get the units in close, then let a more-powerful CO finish the job. Lash works especially well with her cohort, Hawke.



MAX ●

Max's limited movement and firing range are offset by great attack power. Pair Max with a CO who will increase movement, and let Max go second—his Super CO Power will greatly increase the attack of direct-combat units.

NELL ●

Lucky Nell and her sister, Rachel, are a powerful tagging duo. They will earn a huge bonus when paired together. When tagging with Rachel, it doesn't matter who goes first.

OLAF ●

When tagging with Olaf, let his partner go first. Olaf's Super CO Power will cause a blizzard that will negatively affect all COs other than himself. It will also deal 2 HP of damage to all enemy units.

RACHEL ●

Rachel possesses a unique Super CO Power that launches three missiles into clusters of enemy units. Use Rachel first in most tagging situations—her missile attacks serve as a great setup for another CO to finish off the enemy.

SAMI ●

Sami's Super CO Power can end a battle quickly. Start with a CO that can move an infantry unit close to the enemy's headquarters, then switch to Sami, whose CO Power will allow the unit to capture the base in one turn!

SASHA ●

Sasha pairs well with her younger brother, Colin. They both have weak defense, but Sasha's Super CO Power lets her earn funds at an incredible rate. She and Colin can build a large army very quickly, and earn a bonus when they tag.

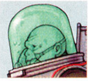
🔴 ALLIED NATION ⚪ BLACK HOLE ARMY

SENSEI 🔴

Sensei's Super CO Power not only increases Battle Copter firepower, but will build a Mech unit with 9 HP on every captured city. If you use Sensei first in a Tag Battle, it may be best to combine the Mech units to bring them to full strength.

SONJA 🔴

Sonja can see farther than any other CO when the Fog of War is present. When tagging, let Sonja's partner go first to move the units into enemy territory, then switch to Sonja to locate hidden enemies and take them out.



VON BOLT ⚪

Von Bolt's Super CO Power, Ex Machina, sends out shockwaves that will damage and paralyze units within his army's range, forcing them to skip a turn. Von Bolt should always go first in a Tag Battle.

CO COMBOS

Some COs tag well together, while others should avoid each other like the plague. The chart below indicates bonuses and penalties (in percentages) for every CO combination. The percentages represent the effectiveness of the units' Super CO Powers when tagging (a blank field indicates 100%). Keep in mind, though, that the success of any CO combination is often relative to a particular situation.

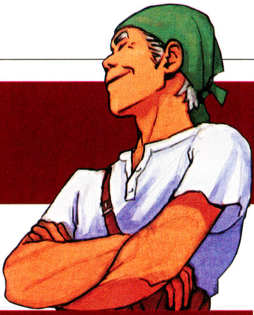
	ADDER	ANDY	COLIN	DRAKE	EAGLE	FLAK	GRIMM	GRIT	HACHI	HAWKE	JAKE	JAVIER	JESS	JUGGER	KANBEI	KINDLE	KOAL	LASH	MAX	NELL	OLAF	RACHEL	SAMI	SASHA	SENSEI	SONJA	VON BOLT
ADDER						105				105							110	105									
ANDY					115					105									110	105			105				90
COLIN								105										90			105			130			90
DRAKE					115					90			105														90
EAGLE		115		115						70			105					90					120				90
FLAK	105																	110									
GRIMM												105												105	110		90
GRIT			105																110		115						90
HACHI																											90
HAWKE	*	105		90	70								90			80		110									
JAKE													110			90						120		105			90
JAVIER							105						110		110										105		90
JESS				105	105					90	110	110															90
JUGGER																110	105										
KANBEI												110													105	130	90
KINDLE										80	90			110			110										
KOAL	110													105		110						65					
LASH	*				90	110				110											80					105	
MAX		110						110												105			105				90
NELL		105																	105			130	105				90
OLAF			105					115										80									90
RACHEL											120						65			130				105			90
SAMI		105			120														105	105						110	90
SASHA			130				105				105											105					90
SENSEI							110					105			105											105	90
SONJA															130			105					110		105		90
VON BOLT		90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90		90	90	90		90				90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	

* Luck increases by five. Additionally, Attack value increases only when Adder initiates the Tag Battle.

04

PLAY THE FIELD

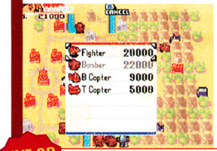
PUT YOUR INTEL INTO ACTION!



Knowledge about terrain, units and COs will get you only so far—making the right moves on the battlefield is essential. The 12 tips below are AWDS rules of thumb—knowing and following them will lead to success no matter what the enemy throws at you.

STUDY THE ENEMY

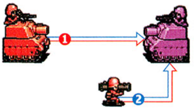
Before making your first move, always look over the enemy's entire arsenal and formulate a plan to counter. For instance, if the enemy controls Bombers or Battle Copters, save your funds until you can build Anti-Air units or flying units of your own. At the start of many battles, you're best off spending your money on Infantry units in an effort to capture buildings and earn more money.



Fighter	20000
Bomber	22000
B Copter	9000
T Copter	5000

USE THE BIG GUNS FIRST

When two units have an enemy in range, always attack with the more-powerful unit first, then let the little guy finish off the foe. And constantly check the enemy's movement range. Getting the first strike with a unit identical to your enemy's will always work in your favor.



LIVE OR DIE TIP
MEMORIZE IT!

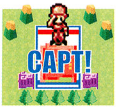
STAY OUT OF HARM'S WAY

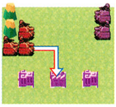
Checking the movement and attack ranges of every unit cannot be stressed enough. When formulating a strategy, always try to move just outside the enemy's range, luring them in so that you can attack first on the following turn. To make sure you can attack from long range when necessary, keep units such as Rocket Launchers in tow.

LIVE OR DIE TIP
MEMORIZE IT!

MAKE A LAND GRAB

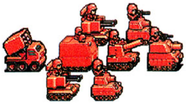
The more property the enemy controls, the more likely the enemy will win. Capturing the opposition's buildings is always the best option, but sometimes, it's necessary to place a non-Infantry unit over enemy factories and wait for help to arrive. This will disable the enemy from building new units.





MAINTAIN FORMATION

Keeping your units close together is important no matter how many units you control. An ideal formation has powerful tanks in front, followed by Artillery to attack from behind. An APC carrying Infantry should be safe in the middle, followed by a Rocket Launcher for some long-distance destruction.



BLOCK YOUR BRIDGES

On some maps, the enemy will need to cross a bridge or a small path to advance on your base. If you can get a unit there to block it long enough to move Artillery into place, you can start picking off enemy units every time they try to attack. Artillery units will be most useful at choke points.

DAMAGE
Plain
Mech

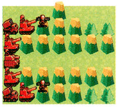
STAY ONE STEP AHEAD

You should always be thinking at least one turn ahead. When attacking enemies on your turf, keep your building locations in mind. If you can attack an enemy while parked on a building you control, you'll receive 2 HP at the beginning of your next turn. This small benefit can result in victory for your unit.

DAMAGE
34
Md Tank
Plain

LAY OUT THE BAIT

Watching enemy units enter a trap of your devising is very satisfying. Mountains can play a big part in these traps, especially when you control Mechs and the enemy does not. Place your Mechs in the mountains (just one space out of enemy reach) and draw in an enemy with tanks or a disposable Infantry unit. Keep Artillery and Rockets just behind the front line to give the enemy a big surprise as it moves in.

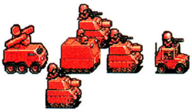


THINK LIKE A THIEF

Sometimes a large group of units will draw enemies away from their headquarters—use their eagerness to your advantage by distracting them long enough to capture their base. Send APCs with Mechs on board on a route that can keep them in the forest for as long as possible. Waiting for a Dual Strike will aid your cause greatly.

PROTECT THE WEAK

In most situations, APCs carrying units should have an escort. The escort will change depending on the threat. Tanks usually work well to lead the way, while Missile Launchers and Anti-Air units are indispensable against incoming airborne enemies.



LIVE OR DIE TIP
MEMORIZE IT!

TAKE ONE FOR THE TEAM

Sometimes a unit can serve the greater good by sacrificing itself. Maps with the Fog of War are a great example. Sending Recon or Infantry units into the unknown is necessary to increase visibility, even if you know the units will not survive. Use the time they buy you to get the rest of your army into formation and prepare an attack.

PROTECT THE MOTHERSHIP

It's always a good idea to leave some units back at the base to protect it. (Artillery, Tanks and Mechs make good base protectors.) The best place for a protecting unit to be positioned is on the base itself. If you can't spare any units, always keep an eye on your base, especially when your foe controls Transport Copters—they'll jump on an empty base like a fly on food, especially when they earn a Dual Strike.

COLLECT JONES

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BUILD THE ULTIMATE WEAPON

15,680 ways to dink with your cannon? Don't be seduced by Sigma Star Saga's options. Stay focused and save the cosmos with the perfect gear.

By Steven Grimm

EVERYONE 10+ E 10+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

With 28 cannon settings, 20 bullet types and 28 impact effects, the Gun Data that you'll collect as you explore Sigma Star Saga's six planets provide a huge variety of gun options. You'll need it: you'll frequently leave the surface of planets, where SSS falls into RPG territory, and be teleported into the cockpit of a gunship when the game turns into a space shooter. But only some Gun Data are must-haves. We'll point out the best to find and implement for boss-battle flights, plus the hundreds of missions that occur randomly. Though you'll have to cope with SSS's wartime politics (and interspecies dating complexities!) on your own, consider us your Gun Data copilot.

3 KINDS OF GUN DATA—GO BALLISTIC!

01 01 01

We've shown cannon data in blue, bullet data in red and impact data in yellow. Your initial data make for basic, weak shooting. Your survival will depend on finding more.

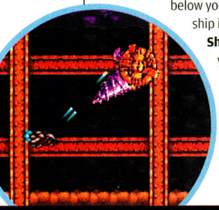
FOREST PLANET

The first time you hit the Forest Planet and its orbiting starbase, you'll be able to find only a few bits of Gun Data to tweak your ship weapon—and two more when you get the Scanner Tool. Far more powerful data, like the Super Vampire effect, is hidden in areas that you can't reach until you get the Girl Wings and other travel-aiding items. Keep track of the impasses (like chasms) that you encounter—if you're power-hungry, you'll want to backtrack to the Forest Planet once you're better-equipped.

BOSS MISSION

16 05 01

During your first visit to the Forest Planet, you'll fly into its mines and "shoot through a solid mile of human scum," as one of your alien masters puts it. Though you'll travel in shafts crammed with a variety of foes, the real challenge is the boss. The drill bit roves the edges of the final arena, so shoot it with the **Free Movement Cannon (16)** no matter where it goes—before, behind, above or below you. The cannon shoots in whatever direction your ship is moving. Do twice the damage with the **Double Shot (05)**. **Bubble (11)**, the one bit of impact data you can collect in your travels that lead up to the boss fight, leaves a rising-bubble aftereffect, but it's a curiosity at best. Stick with the basic **Absorb (01)** impact Gun Data, and look forward to the hours ahead when you'll have gobs of impact data on your hands.



Highlighted items show the prime Gun Data to latch onto; callouts point out other interesting data. Collectors, the rest is for you.

#	TYPE	GUN DATA	ITEM NEEDED
STARBASE 1			
12	Cannon	Rotating Cannon	Scanner Tool
FOREST PLANET			
#	**TYPE**	**GUN DATA**	**ITEM NEEDED**
10	Cannon	Vertical Alternating Cannon	–
11	Cannon	Horizontal Alternating Cannon	–
16	Cannon	Free Movement Cannon	–
02	Bullet	Normal Shot	–
05	Bullet	Double Shot	–
12	Bullet	Steer Shot	–
18	Bullet	Power Shot	–
11	Impact	Bubble	–
06	Cannon	V-Cannon	Scanner Tool
20	Cannon	Twin Nodes	Krill Puck
05	Impact	Boomerang	Krill Puck
18	Impact	Duo Counter	Krill Puck
22	Cannon	Double Node Orbit	Girl Wings
10	Bullet	Seeker Missile	Girl Wings
25	Impact	Vampire	Girl Wings
26	Impact	Super Vampire	Girl Wings
27	Impact	EXP Miner	Girl Wings
28	Impact	EXP Miner Plus	Girl Wings
20	Impact	Quad Counter	Warp

When you're hurting for Gun Data early in the game, the VAC helps you pick off foes above and below your ship—good for scraping up as much experience as possible.

Your ship won't fire when Twin Nodes is set, but it will be flanked above and below by firing nodes. Equipped with wide-area bullet data, Twin Nodes can help double-flood the flight field with gunfire.

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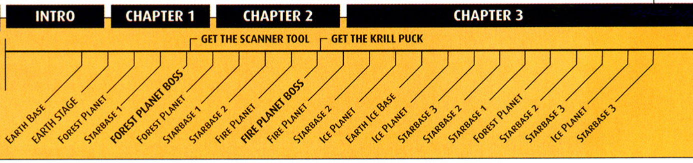
YOUR FLIGHT PATTERN

SSS involves lots of return trips, which provide opportunities to explore Gun Data-laden areas you couldn't reach earlier in the game. You can backtrack only at certain times, however, so use this timeline to keep track of when you'll have to head back.



FIRE PLANET

Upon reaching the second planet, you can scrounge up lots of Gun Data right off the bat, which will give you plenty of options to play with (though a few are more gimmicky than useful). Employ your Scanner Tool in all areas to find any invisible data, including the essential Exp. Leech hidden on Starbase 2. Three of these first-visit data bits are crucial for beating the boss—be sure to find 'em.

BOSS MISSION

03 03 16

At the end of your first visit to the Fire Planet, you'll probe for secrets in the planet's bowels, such as the mile-long boss worm whose body rises and falls like a deadly tide. Fast flying will help you avoid capsizing in its wake, and setting the perfect Gun Data will give you the firepower you need to hammer on the worm's weak spot—a debris-spewing head that will rear up. Use the **Triple Cannon (03)** to spray three streams of firepower ahead of your ship (one straight ahead, two others at slight angles). Couple that with the **Heavy Shot (03)** bullet, which is a high-damage projectile, to chip away the worm's health faster. Also, equip the **Exp. Leech (16)** as soon as you find it—long before you take on the boss mission—since it'll let you gain experience (and thus power) much more quickly. Its side effect: when you reach a new level, you'll also regain all of your health.

STARBASE 2

#	TYPE	GUN DATA	ITEM NEEDED
14	Cannon	X Cannon	–
06	Bullet	Triple Shot	–
16	Impact	Exp. Leech	Scanner Tool
21	Cannon	Node Orbit	Girl Wings

FOREST PLANET

#	TYPE	GUN DATA	ITEM NEEDED
03	Cannon	Triple Cannon	–
04	Cannon	Front/Back Cannon	–
03	Bullet	Heavy Shot	–
04	Bullet	Charge Shot	–
04	Impact	Smoulder	–
09	Impact	Ignite	–
05	Cannon	Vertical Cannon	Scanner Tool
07	Cannon	Scatter Cannon	Scanner Tool
26	Cannon	Patrol Node	Scanner Tool
07	Bullet	Wave Shot	Scanner Tool
15	Impact	Bullet Eater	Scanner Tool
19	Impact	Super Power Shot	Girl Wings
17	Impact	Bomb Steal	Girl Wings
21	Impact	Ingest	Girl Wings
25	Cannon	Double Sweeper	Warp
23	Impact	Air Quake	Warp

The tight laser trio of the Triple Shot is even better than the Double Shot for broadening gunfire. Until you gain far-more potent bullet data, switch out your Double Shot for the Triple Shot.

Flights can occur any time as you walk a planet, and certain kinds of missions tend to be tied to specific areas of the map. If you're in an area plagued by missions with tight clusters of fliers, use Smoulder to leave fleet-burning energy in the trail of a foe's explosion.

ICE PLANET

The Ice Planet has its own mysteries in the deep freeze, but it lacks two things: Its space base holds no Gun Data, and there's no boss battle tied to the planet. Its frigid wasteland does conceal plenty of Gun Data. Though none of it is a sole standout, you may find data configurations that fuse so-so stand-alones—such as the **Super Wave Shot (08)**—into a powerful ship weapon.

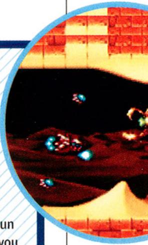
ICE PLANET

#	TYPE	GUN DATA	ITEM NEEDED
08	Cannon	Sprinkler Cannon	–
09	Cannon	Cross Cannon	–
10	Impact	Fork	Scanner
13	Cannon	Max Spread Cannon	Krill Boots
07	Impact	Vertical Spray	Krill Boots
13	Impact	Shield	Krill Boots
08	Bullet	Super Wave Shot	Wings
22	Impact	Revenge	Wings

The Super Wave Shot flows a sine wave of energy in front of your ship. Without aiming, you have a fair chance of hitting inbound foes. Coupled with the Twin Node, however, the SWS unleashes a nearly inescapable twin stream.

PLANET-HOPPING MADE EASIER

22 19 18



Flights aren't just about battling the bosses. Most combat revolves around random flights. The story that spans from the Fire Planet to the Sand Temple boss bounces you around four planets on various errands, and you'll fly hundreds of random missions as you explore. Tweaking your Gun Data for each environment's most likely scenarios will get you far. Don't want to tinker? Use the following Gun Data to shorten your missions: The **Double Node Orbit (22)** gun setting will put two firing nodes in orbit around your ship—both the orbit and the firing rate are fast, so it fills the field with shots. Combined with the **Super Power Shot (19)**, which trumps the Heavy Shot for sheer strength, the nodes will obliterate nearly everything coming at you. And since most missions require you to nail a set total of enemies, the **Duo Counter (18)** will chop your flying time in half; every blasted enemy counts as a double kill. Along the way to the Sand Planet, you'll have to battle the Earth armada's mech boss, which flies all around your position like the Forest Planet's drill bit. Haul out the **Free Movement Cannon (16)** and pair it with the Super Power Shot to send the mech packing in no time at all.

CHAPTER 4
CHAPTER 5
CHAPTER 6

GET THE GIRL WINGS
GET THE WARP TOOL

ICE PLANET BOSS
STARBASE 3
STARBASE 4
SAND PLANET
STARBASE 4
STARBASE 1
FOREST PLANET
STARBASE 1
STARBASE 4
STARBASE 3
ICE PLANET
STARBASE 3
STARBASE 2
FIRE PLANET
STARBASE 2
STARBASE 4
SAND PLANET
STARBASE 4
STARBASE 2
STARBASE 4
SAND PLANET BOSS
STARBASE 4
STARBASE 5
FORGOTTEN PLANET
FORGOTTEN PLANET BOSS
FORGOTTEN PLANET
STARBASE 5
FLIGHT TO EARTH BASE
EARTH BASE
STARBASE 5
STARBASE 6
KRILL PLANET
KRILL PLANET BOSS

SAND PLANET

The first time you touch down on the Sand Planet, you can explore little of its sprawling deserts and ancient buildings. But when you get the Girl Wings, you'll be able to soar over its gaps to reach new areas where several kinds of Gun Data wait. (Frankly, we find most of this planet's data too crazy for most situations, but a highly experimental pilot may find combos for specific flight missions that prove us wrong!) Gun Data obsessives will want to brave the desert's every dry pore to scare up the complete collection.

BOSS MISSION

03 19 26

On a later visit to the Sand Planet, you'll fly into the temple to find a human scientist in an arena filled with dozens of laser-equipped tiles that you must eliminate—it takes time, but it's not excessively hard. The tricky part is flying through the temple with enough health left over for the boss fight. You'll soar through swift diagonal descents; use the **Triple Cannon (03)** to shoot diagonally as you plunge. The mission's enemies take a lot more damage; use the **Super Power Shot (19)** to burn through them faster. And equip the **Super Vampire (26)** aftereffect, which sucks health from fallen foes, to recoup enough to let you face the boss with plenty to spare.

STARBASE 4

#	TYPE	GUN DATA	ITEM NEEDED
02	Impact	Splinter	Scanner Tool

SAND PLANET

#	TYPE	GUN DATA	ITEM NEEDED
19	Cannon	Free Aim Cannon	–
03	Impact	Barrier	–
15	Bullet	Rocket	Scanner Tool
16	Bullet	Bounce Shot	Scanner Tool
15	Cannon	Angel Cannon	Girl Wings
24	Cannon	Sweeper	Girl Wings
12	Impact	Totem	Girl Wings
02	Cannon	Rapid Cannon	Warp
24	Impact	Curse	Warp

FORGOTTEN PLANET

You won't spend a lot of time on the Forgotten Planet, but you'll remember its miniboss, which pops up in random missions: a spiked creature that floats back and forth along a narrow channel. When fired upon, it sprays pellets; set Gun Data that enables backward shooting (you'll have many options by this point), and shoot it only when you're at the opposite end of the screen to give yourself a fighting chance of avoiding the pellets. You'll likely face it several times before you ever reach the insanely hard spirit entity.

BOSS MISSION

18 19 26

The first half of the boss-mission flight is standard stuff, but in the second half, your ship accelerates to a reckless speed. Lightning-fast reflexes are critical, and using area-clearing bombs (collect a few before you take on the mission) will help in a pinch. The boss is a hovering spirit that summons rocks out of thin air. As you avoid the boulders, you'll want the **Node Control Cannon (18)** to help you out: at any moment, you can steer either your ship or the rapidly autofiring node. When your ship is clear of the rocks, pilot the node to blast at the spirit itself. The **Super Power Shot (19)** will make shorter work of nicking away the boss's health. When the spirit transforms for its second phase, it will materialize rocks at your ship's position, so keep your vessel moving constantly. If you have the **Super Vampire (26)** equipped, you should heal more than you get hurt.

On its own, the self-explanatory Richochet Shot setting seems frivolous, but paired with a cannon that fires multiple shots at once, like the Triple Cannon, it forms a ship weapon that will fill the screen with a storm of rebounding shots, especially when your ship flies through narrow chambers.

STARBASE 5

#	TYPE	GUN DATA	ITEM NEEDED
18	Cannon	Node Control Cannon	–
06	Bullet	Bubble Shot	Scanner Tool

FORGOTTEN PLANET

#	TYPE	GUN DATA	ITEM NEEDED
19	Impact	Trio Counter	–
27	Cannon	Double Patrol	Scanner Tool
28	Cannon	Mirror Node	Scanner Tool
11	Bullet	Bomb	Scanner Tool
17	Bullet	Ricochet Shot	Scanner Tool
17	Cannon	Locked Movement Cannon	Girl Wings
08	Impact	Pass Through	Girl Wings

KRILL PLANET

During many stretches of SSS, your travel around the galaxy is restricted, but once you reach the Krill Planet, you'll have the freedom to go anywhere. With the Warp Tool in hand, you'll have the last of the items you need for scavenging all data on all planets. Before you tackle the final boss, grab any data that you need. The Max Power Shot and Super Shield on and above the Krill Planet are your last must-haves.

KRILL PLANET

#	TYPE	GUN DATA	ITEM NEEDED
20	Bullet	Max Power Shot	Scanner Tool

STARBASE 6

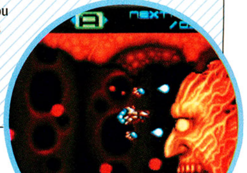
#	TYPE	GUN DATA	ITEM NEEDED
23	Cannon	Triple Node Orbit	–
06	Impact	Wave Crash	–
09	Bullet	Max Wave Shot	Scanner Tool
14	Bullet	Mine	Scanner Tool
14	Impact	Super Shield	Scanner Tool

The Mine data will turn your weapon into a device that plops a mine in midair. If you use it with the Node Control Cannon, you can direct the node ahead to slap up thick walls of mines—an explosive strategy.

BOSS MISSION

20 20 14

The finale involves a creepy twist and an even creepier boss: the Flesh Deity. The flight to its weak spot will take you through its innards until you reach a giant head that fires eye-lasers, barfs projectiles and segments the chamber with tendrils. It's very difficult to beat the creature—unless you set the Gun Data as follows. The boss may heal itself occasionally, so wearing the creature down faster than it restores health is vital. Use the **Twin Nodes (20)** to double your strikes and equip the **Max Power Shot (20)** to increase the damage. Keep blasting away steadily—you'll defeat the Flesh Deity after several minutes if you can avoid taking damage. Setting the impact data for **Super Shield (14)** will make you invulnerable for a few seconds every time you nail the boss with 30 shots. Your shots add up fast, so you'll be untouchable most of the time!



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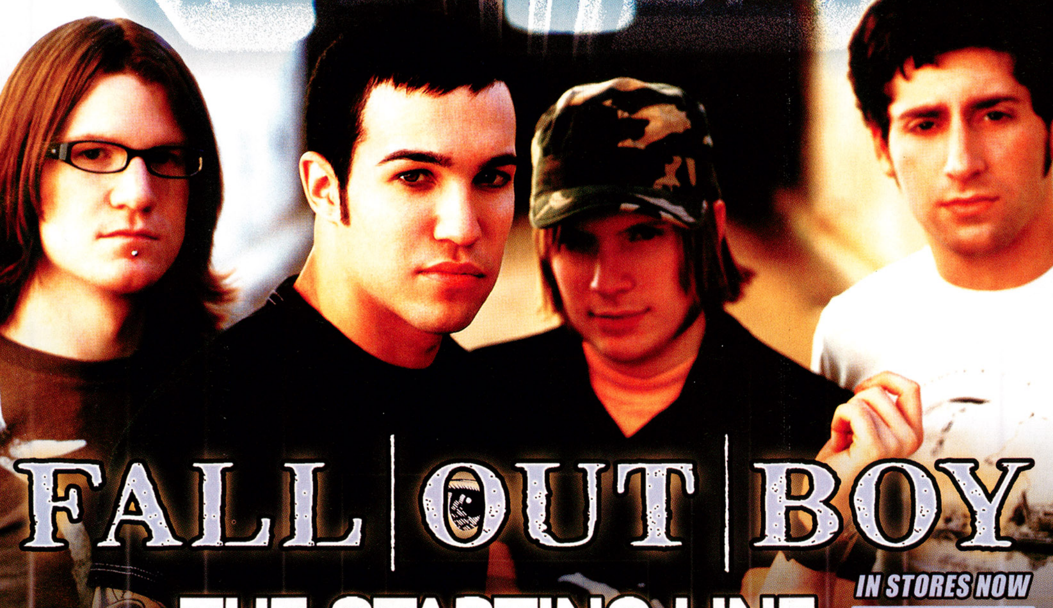

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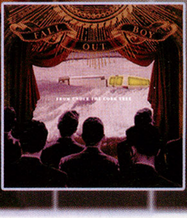
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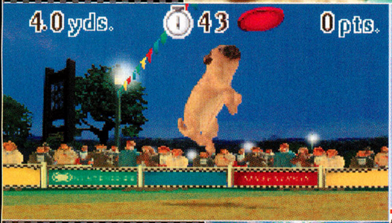
REVIEWS

In-depth reviews of the latest games

Does the Hulk's latest make us angry or soothe the savage beast within us? Read our massive review to find out.



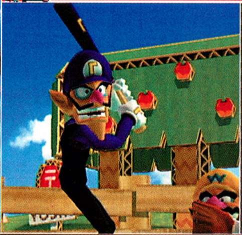
Reinforcements just in the nick of time!
It's good to have friends!

Advance Wars: Dual Strike, Geist, Pac 'N Roll and more.

96
It's no dog—highly anticipated puppy sim Nintendogs packs in tons of fun.

Summoned Skull

99
Surprise of the month: Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubador!



99
Baseball has been very, very good to Mario and his pals.

THE POUND AND THE FURRY

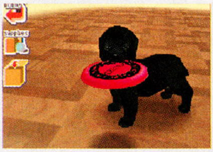
BEST IN SHOW

NINTENDOGS

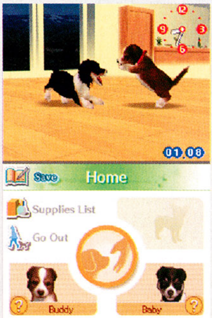
RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

There's something endearing about puppies: their helplessness, their never-ending need for attention and the way that a good scratch behind the ears melts away all of their troubles. That Nintendogs captures the bundle-of-nerves-and-fur nature of its subjects to a T is a true accomplishment. From the moment you select your puppy and take it home from the kennel, you'll bond with it using touch control to pet and scratch it, and voice control to call it by name and give it training commands. The dog's responses to your care and instructions are real. It wriggles to show you where it wants to be scratched and barks to let you know if it's unhappy. And the more you attend to your puppy—feed it regularly, wash it, teach it—the more it will respond and bond with you in return. It takes absolutely no stretch of the imagination to believe that there is an actual puppy on the other side of the screen.



Nintendogs doesn't have traditional end-game goals. In fact, it resembles Animal Crossing in basic structure and, like Animal Crossing, runs on an internal clock. There are daily activities to participate in, monetary rewards for winning competitions, places to shop and items to accumulate on walks with your dog. A typical playing session lasts for about half an hour. After that, you've exhausted both your puppy and the available options. The brevity of a session may seem limiting for players who are used to pounding through a game for several hours, but the game shows its depth over time. When you pick it up a few hours or a day after your last play, your puppy will be waiting for you, hungry, thirsty and ready for another round of walks and competitions.

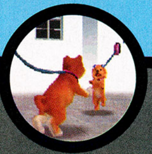


Three types of trials—disc toss, agility and obedience—are your main sources of income. If you finish in one of the top three slots, you'll earn cash and the chance to move on to the next level. Success requires skill (the ability to throw the disc to the edge of your dog's range with a flick of the wrist, for example) and composure. If you don't finish in the money, you'll move down a class, and you may have to wait for some time before you can enter again, as you are limited to three competitions per day. The competitions are well-executed and challenging, but repeated jokes by the announcers before and after each trial are tedious and require a lot of needless text-advancing to get through.

The game is available in three versions, each one offering a different slate of six breeds. By using Bark mode to interface with a Nintendogs owner who has a different version of the game, you will make that owner's selected breed available in your kennel. You can also make breeds available by earning Trainer points, which you receive for keeping your dog happy, going on walks and winning competitions. You can be a good Nintendogs player—take advantage of every opportunity to enter and win competitions, walk to the farthest reaches of the neighborhood to collect every obscure item—but it's not a game that you can really excel at. Success is more of a product of endurance than skill. Yet the game compels you to play every day so you can keep track of your puppy, to make sure that it doesn't forget you or the tricks that you've taught it, and eventually to add more puppies to your fold. If you're drawn to dogs, Nintendogs could easily become an obsession.

—**GEORGE S.**

A SECOND OPINION

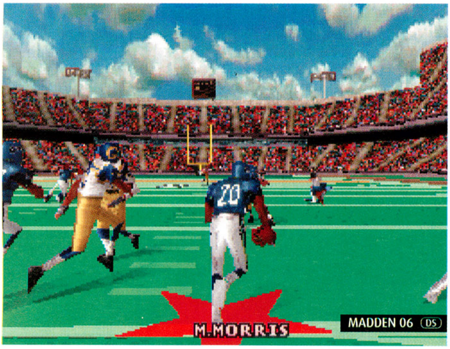


RATING: 8.0

There's no denying that Nintendogs is a great achievement. Like any game that receives an abundance of first-party love from Nintendo, Nintendogs goes to great lengths to transplant you into an immersive world the moment you switch it on, and its use of the DS's touch-screen and voice-recognition functionality is flawless. From the puppy animations to the way the little guys respond to commands, the attention to detail in Nintendogs never ceases to amaze. No stone has been left unturned, except one: Where's the excitement? I'm not insinuating that a good game needs level breaks and boss battles to be interesting. But variations in Nintendogs gameplay are often too subtle to make much of an impression. Besides unlocking new dogs and items, there's just not much to do. Nintendogs requires a gamer to tolerate a lot of repetition to enjoy the experience. Like in Tetris or Animal Crossing, you're faced with similar visuals and situations over and over again, but for some reason you just can't stop playing. Unlike Tetris or Animal Crossing, however, Nintendogs is closely simulating a real-life experience. Without any fantasy element, raising a Nintendog can get exhausting.

In the end, though, Nintendogs cannot be judged by current gaming standards. It doesn't pretend to be a traditional video game, and what it does it does very well. In an age when the gaming industry churns out popular franchise titles like canned food, Nintendogs pushes the boundaries of the gaming experience. Japanese gamers have already embraced Nintendogs, showing just how addictive the title can be. Though it may not be the most action-packed game, it's definitely a leap in a great direction for gaming.

—**ANDY M.**



×19/60
×3
GUMBY (GBA)

SPACE INVADERS (DS)

PAC 'N ROLL (DS)

MADDEN NFL 06

RATING: 7.0 GBA / 8.0 DS

PLATFORM: **Game Boy Advance/ Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Electronic Arts**
DEVELOPER: **Electronic Arts**
ESRB: **Everyone**

The GBA version of EA's Madden NFL series took a big leap forward with its 2005 version, but Madden NFL 06 coasts to the end zone with no significant improvements. After the requisite roster updates and the inclusion of Mini Camp (four training-oriented minigames), the only obvious addition is The Foo Fighters' "No Way Back." The DS version, however, does offer big changes over its predecessor, including a Franchise mode, cleaner graphics and stat screens that you can switch to midgame via touch control. The kicking game has also undergone improvements; it now allows you to send the ball on its way via a touch-controlled interface. Although neither version adopts the console iteration's focus on passing this season, they both remain solid titles with good football sense and strong gameplay. —**George S.**

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT'S YOUR PICK FOR VERSATILITY IN 2-D/3-D FRANCHISES?

Our 2-D or Not 2-D article this issue explores the resurgence of X-and-Y-axis gaming, just when we thought it might have flatlined. We asked our reviewers which franchise that has dabbled in both 2-D and 3-D has entertained them the most.

STEVEN GRIMM

It's hard enough to own 2-D and 3-D, but to reinvent both, too? Only Zelda. The series hasn't just rested on its laurels (Link to the Past, Ocarina of Time) but continues to evolve them (Four Swords, Twilight Princess).

CHRIS SHEPPERD

Don't get me wrong, I really do like many of the 2-D games still being made—Castlevania and Mario are still a blast. But in my mind you just can't beat the immersive, realistic qualities of a good 3-D game.

ANDY MYERS

While so many 2-D franchises have fallen flat when undergoing a 3-D makeover, Final Fantasy has shined. Crystal Chronicles was as revolutionary for multiplayer gaming as the original FF was for RPG gaming.

GEORGE SINFIELD

The Super Mario series led the way for both 2-D platforming and 3-D platforming. With the new Super Mario Bros. game, it returns to its roots and finds exciting new territory to explore.

STEVE THOMASON

As much as it pains me, I'm going to have to agree with Steven. The 3-D Zeldas are every bit as brilliant as their 2-D forerunners, and I think the Z-targeting system really helped facilitate a smooth transition.

GUMBY VS. THE ASTROBOTS

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: **Game Boy Advance**
PUBLISHER: **Namco**
DEVELOPER: **Torus Games**
ESRB: **Everyone**

It's surprising that a character that's been around as long as Gumby hasn't earned a video game before now. Gumby's console debut pays homage to classic platformers such as Metroid and Donkey Kong Country, and it does so fairly well. The flexible clay hero can learn a variety of fun moves throughout the game, including morphing into a ball and performing a helicopter-like double jump. The problem with Gumby vs. The Astrobots is that it ends when your feet are barely even wet, and there is almost no replay value. Even in Hard mode, the game goes by far too fast. Which is too bad, because the graphics and gameplay mechanics are solid, and the levels are diverse. With a few more enemy types, longer levels and a higher difficulty level, Gumby vs. The Astrobots could have joined the ranks of great GBA platformers. —**Andy M.**

SPACE INVADERS REVOLUTION

RATING: 4.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Mastiff**
DEVELOPER: **Taito**
ESRB: **Everyone**

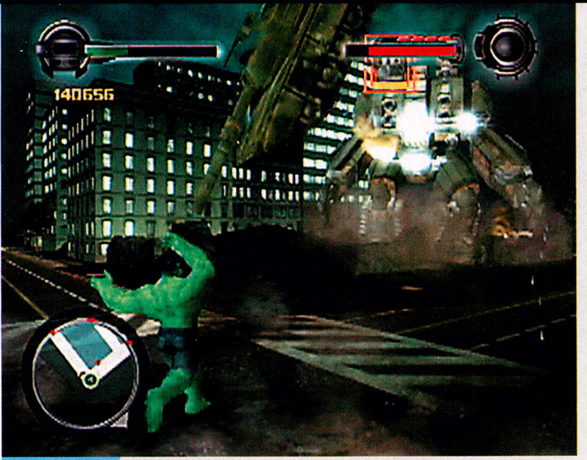
Retro games walk a fine line between giving players a feeling of nostalgia and letting them see how far video games have come. Space Invaders briefly conjures the former—memories of spending hours popping quarters into arcade machines will flood back into the minds of gaming geezers. But that feeling is lost when hints of newer games such as Meteos and Nanostray make us realize that what we're playing has since been done bigger and better, and there's little reason to turn back. With no multiplayer support, very little replay value, underachieving graphics and weak sound effects, Space Invaders fails to revive the franchise's former glory. —**Chris S.**

PAC 'N ROLL

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Namco**
DEVELOPER: **Namco**
ESRB: **Everyone**

The DS touch screen is your trackball in a wrist-wrenching adventure that plays like Marble Madness in Pac World. As you swipe your stylus over an image of spheroid Pac-Man on the lower screen, the character rolls into motion on the upper screen. While negotiating ramps, sudden drop-offs and plenty of ghosts, you must collect enough Pac-Dots to unlock the next gate and advance through five themed areas, each containing several levels. The stylus control is perfectly tuned and single-swipe boosts are easy to trigger, yet quick and accurate movement gets tiring after several minutes. Fortunately, most levels are short, giving you a chance to rest before you move on to the next challenge. The camera moves automatically, but you can use manual control to rotate it left and right for a different view of the intricate environment. However, the lack of control over camera height makes it difficult to detect subtle slopes. Boss levels play out at the end of each world, but the free-form rolling levels are much more successful. —**George S.**



GET SMASHED!

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **VIVENDI UNIVERSAL GAMES**
DEVELOPER: **RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Disband your fight club. The Hulk's first great video game provides a much better way to vent your aggression. Though flaws punch holes in Ultimate Destruction's big potential, vast piles of variety heaped onto core gameplay that's endlessly fun helps you look past problems, much like the best sandbox games out there (I'm lookin' at you, GTA).

In fact, just as urban sandboxes risk becoming as cookie-cutter as suburban sprawl, Ultimate Destruction makes a city rampage dangerous again. Drive-by shootings? Been there, done that. Grabbing a city bus, smashing it into a makeshift skateboard, grinding through barricades then hurling your metro-board at a chopper in pursuit? Now that's fun, even if you do it 500 times. Not that Ultimate Destruction is a one-trick pony in the mayhem department—the game lives up to its name by providing seemingly endless (and well-executed) ways to wreak havoc.

With 150 moves and combos to learn, you'd think that a few of them would be duds or at least forgettable. But the move-purchasing system (you'll get smash-related currency mainly by destroying enemies and property) opens only a handful of moves at each stage of the game. You'll continue to fall back on punching, dashing and ground-smashing even if you splurge for everything on the first list—and you'll get to know every move intimately as you struggle to survive tank attacks in the early missions.

Later on, as you go toe-to-toe with armored soldiers, face blitzkriegs from homing missiles and get stalked by giant mechs, you'll be thankful to see more-powerful moves, such as the weaponizations, appear on the list. Though from the get-go you can throw anything that you can pick up, you can't weaponize items until you've bought the related move. You can make cars into boxing gloves early on. In time, you'll be able to turn trucks into shields, bowl with boulders and (just when you wish there were a way to deal with battalions kicking your butt) use wrecking balls on chains as yo-yos of ludicrous power. In addition, you can buy devastator moves that draw upon Critical Mass, an energy-glutted state that Hulk reaches if he collects enough power left behind by fallen foes. Moves like the Critical Thunderclap, which amps up the basic Sonic Clap explosion, steal the scene by slowing down the world's action to let you watch the small-scale apocalypse that the Hulk unleashes. Watching choppers fall from the sky after a well-timed thunderclap is a thing of great beauty.

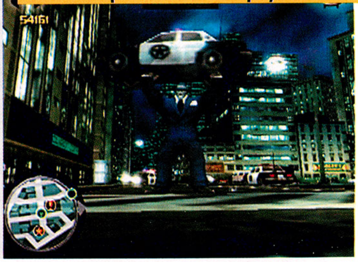
Ultimate Destruction is set in two massive environments, the City and the Badlands. Radical Entertainment hasn't lavished enough detail on the landscapes, however. It's not key that we see a rack of Chinese barbecue glistening in a store window in the Mandarin Gate Mews area (especially since Hulk usually travels by bounding the length of blocks in single strides or running up skyscrapers to get elevation), but both the City and the Badlands do suffer from patches of sameness that will leave you disoriented at times.

But the main problems—targeting and slowdown—become obvious only when the game sends crowds of tough foes against you. What seems silky-smooth when you're waltzing down a street dotted with slow-moving tanks becomes a series of pratfalls when you're trying to take down helicopters swarming above, mini-mechs dogging your heels and homing-missile launchers bombarding your position. Thankfully, many boss fights tend to be single-foe arena battles, so the problems don't hit you at the most critical junctures of the story.

Gameplay faults aside, Hulk fans will be blogging up a storm about the plot of Ultimate Destruction, penned by veteran Marvel writer Paul Jenkins, which brings in some of the main players of the Hulk universe (like crusty Hulk-hater General Ross), split-personality dynamics (Bruce Banner's Devil Hulk comes to the fore like never before) and one major nemesis, Abomination, who gets an origin-story makeover that's a big modern-day departure from his classic Cold War-era story. Character animation in cut-scenes is awesome for the Hulk, Devil Hulk and Abomination, but Radical has a wooden touch with humans. Good thing VU Games has drawn upon great voice talent, such as Hellboy's Ron Perlman, whose Blonsky sounds as evil as his alter ego, Abomination, looks.

But Ultimate Destruction is ultimately about rampaging. You'll be blowing off steam and tearing down the City and the Badlands long after the story's end. Dozens of challenges (some as delightfully perverse as seeing how far you can bat a soldier with a girder) and unlockables (such as playing as other historic Hulks, like the quirky Vegas gangster, Joe Fixit) make mindless destruction a short-term career for gamers, and the smash of the year for the Jade Giant's worshippers. —**STEVEN G.**

Hulk goes gangsta—at least as an unlockable character pulled from his psycho history.



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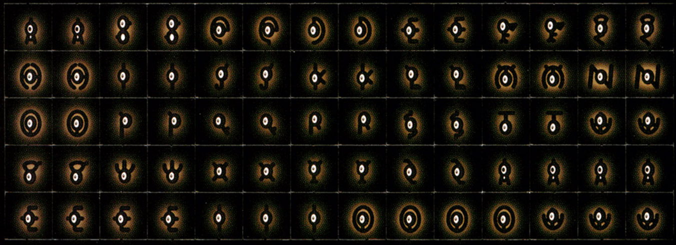

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I don't understand. Is it only Kitty that can save the day? I'm the world's greatest penguin!
HELLO KITTY (GCN)

400
ATK 2100
ATK 2500
Battle Phase
YU-GI-OH! (DS)
Summoned Skull

POWER RANGERS (GBA)

HELLO KITTY: ROLLER RESCUE

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **NAMCO**
DEVELOPER: **RENDERWARE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Though a 28-year-old male gamer probably isn't Namco's target audience for Hello Kitty: Roller Rescue, I found smashing Cubivore-esque enemies with a heart-shaped hammer enjoyable on a certain level. Guilty pleasures aside, though, Hello Kitty: Roller Rescue falls flat. While the surreal, candy-coated world looks nice, the game mechanics are unresponsive and shallow. Hello Kitty moves around on inline skates, but so slowly that it never feels quite right. The game is actually more fun after you complete it with Hello Kitty—you can play through the adventure again as Badtz Maru, with a frying pan for a weapon, and no skates. HKRR is easy to criticize, but Sanrio fans will probably love it. The cut-scenes look great, and there's plenty to unlock, including new outfits, character profiles and additional weapons that Hello Kitty can use to lay the smack down. —ANDY M.

POWER RANGERS S.P.D.

RATING: 4.0

PLATFORM: **GAME BOY ADVANCE**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **NATSUME**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

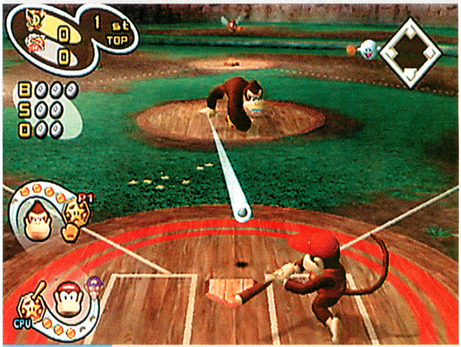
After Time Force, Wild Force, Ninja Storm, Dino Thunder and now S.P.D. (Space Patrol Delta), THQ's GBA Power Rangers formula is due for a change. S.P.D. follows the same side-scrolling, punching and jumping formula with a smattering of minigames thrown in for variety. Individual Rangers take turns running through bad-guy hideouts while slapping hordes of henchmen silly. Although some Rangers attack with their fists and others carry weapons, the battles are identically monotonous. At times, you are required to defeat all enemies before you can move on. When you're not, though, it's much better to avoid the enemies, since you don't earn points or power-up rewards for defeating them. The Time Force/Ninja Storm double pak is a better value for casual Power Rangers fans. —GEORGE S.

YU-GI-OH!: NIGHTMARE TROUBADOUR

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **KONAMI**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Trading card games have always been awful in video games. Portable versions have crammed copious detail onto a small screen; bigger-screened console versions lose the "have deck, will travel" spirit. YGO's DS debut makes history. Dual screens let players split their focus, studying card minutiae while scrutinizing the field; touch control takes card handling and deck building out of menu drudgery and closer to the tactile ease of TCG. One flaw: Monsters spring to life from cards (a dream come true for fans), then merely sway (a letdown, given the cartoon's hyperactive clashes). In addition to a 2P wireless mode (both people need a DS card to battle and trade), the game has a robust solo mode that smartly challenges the player to rethink his approach as he battles against a diverse collection of card-slingin' strategists. —STEVEN G.



SPORTY SPICE

DOUBLE PLAY

MARIO SUPERSTAR BASEBALL

RATING: 9.0

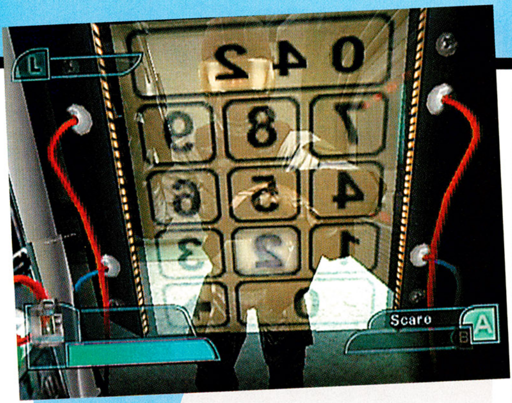
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NAMCO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

As both a single-player baseball stadium tour and multiplayer party game, Mario Superstar Baseball is a solid hit. It's big on baseball fundamentals and chock-full of Mushroom Kingdom flair, plus it shows a keen awareness of the situational play that gives the nation's pastime its edge. Key matchups are set with dramatic camera angles and game-changing significance. If you get a hit or retire the batter during a crucial moment, you power up your team with rewards such as the Team Star, which you can use to blow the ball by the competition. In single-player Challenge mode, you can also earn the right to steal players from the opposing squad.

Challenge mode replaces the season mode that you would expect in a traditional baseball sim. You select one of five famed characters (Mario, Wario, Peach, Yoshi or Donkey Kong) as your captain and tour the kingdom with a squad of second bananas as you work toward challenging Bowser's team to the ultimate three-plus-inning contest. It takes much less time to get through Challenge mode than it would to complete a season, but four degrees of difficulty add to the game's length. Minigames earn you coins, which you can use to purchase stat-increasing items and special pitches, and in-game mission victories add players to your team. One drawback is that you can field only nine players in a game (no substitutions). So, once you hit the diamond, you're committed. Also, you can purchase only a single special item per game, which is extremely limiting.

Exhibition mode allows two players to build teams and face each other on any of six fields. Most of them feature obstacles and hazards, but if you want to play a clean game, the safe confines of Mario Stadium are for you. Seven minigames involve up to four participants, as does Toy Field mode, which cycles players through positions in the outfield, on the mound and at the plate.

The game's controls are top-notch, especially the arcade-style pitching and hitting. The fielders are often very slow, however, and they drop the ball more than pros would. Also, some of the characters carry small bats that barely cover the plate, making strikeouts common. Despite its minor flaws, Mario Superstar Baseball deserves a place among the Mario sports-title elite.
—GEORGE S.



WHERE'S CASPER?

OOOOH, SCARY.

GEIST

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: N-SPACE
ESRB: MATURE

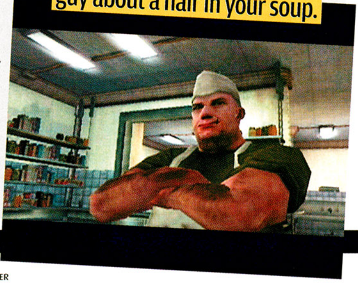
Remember all the buzz about Geist at E3 2003, when it was considered one of the show's biggest surprises? Fast-forward to the present: those thoughts are long gone, as is the potential brilliance that triggered interest in the game. The Geist now hitting store shelves is a ghost of what it once was.

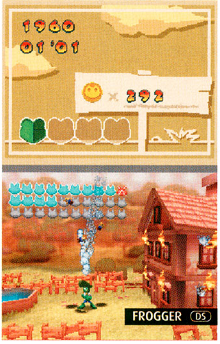
The fundamentals behind the game haven't changed. You've had your soul excised from your body by an evil scientist who plans on harvesting it and other souls for his nefarious purposes. Something goes horribly wrong (of course) and your soul escapes containment, presenting you with the opportunity to track down your skin and bones and hop back inside.

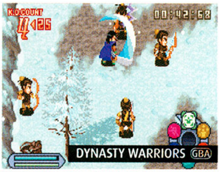
What early previewers saw was a character that could hop from body to body, turning one enemy against another then bailing out of the body while the infighting continued. But we ended up with something far more fixed—you can inhabit only certain people placed strategically throughout the game. They're there to perform jobs such as flipping light switches and making soup, but they're otherwise unnecessary to advance the unimagiative story.

Geist is more pleasing to the eye than it was when it first debuted, but the game's production value is otherwise rough around the edges. The enemies are dim-witted but manage to stay alive longer than they should thanks to awful hit detection. The game sometimes has to cheat, as well, by preventing you from entering or exiting a body when doing so would let you exploit a flaw in the games mechanics. Due to the omnipresence of inconsistant game design the 8-10 play time, which would be satisfactory for an enjoyable game, is simply too long for Geist. —CHRIS S.

I dare you to complain to this guy about a hair in your soup.







FROGGER: HELMET CHAOS

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
DEVELOPER: KCE HAWAII
ESRB: EVERYONE

Frogger hasn't fared as well as some of his fellow arcade icons over the years, and unfortunately his latest adventure fails to reverse that trend. A top-down platforming romp for the DS, Helmet Chaos isn't a bad game, per se; it's just mediocre. The environments and characters are bland, tapping the control pad to take each hop gets annoying, and the game does little to take advantage of the hardware outside of some uninspired minigames. Our amphibious protagonist also has no method of attack, which means he has to avoid every enemy in his (usually linear) path. Though that may be faithful to the property's traffic-dodging roots, it's not a lot of fun in a modern-day platformer. Helmet Chaos does have a surprisingly quirky sense of humor and some decent voice acting, but it's not enough to recapture the series's long-lost magic. —STEVE T.

DYNASTY WARRIORS ADVANCE

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: KOEI
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

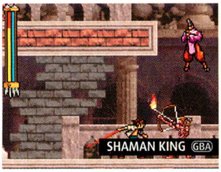
Boil down Koei's cash cow to its bones, and you'll see what's made DW so popular on consoles: man-versus-army battles steeped in testosterone and ancient Chinese history. Bless its brutal soul, DWA has button-mashing down: Koei has managed to squeeze just enough combos from the GBA's buttons to keep the combat frantic, though just not as satisfying as the console versions are. The game also packs in—or is that crams in?—DW's epic treatment of its subject matter. You'll battle through 180 maps as one of 13 characters from three factions, each offering a different perspective on the war story, and your eyes will glaze over from the sheer number of names and details. So much history on one wee screen? Hard to pull off, but DWA does have gameplay (and replay) value that ranks among the best on the GBA. —STEVEN G.

ZOOO

RATING: 4.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: IGNITION ENTERTAINMENT
DEVELOPER: SUCCESS/BUDDIEZ, INC.
ESRB: EVERYONE

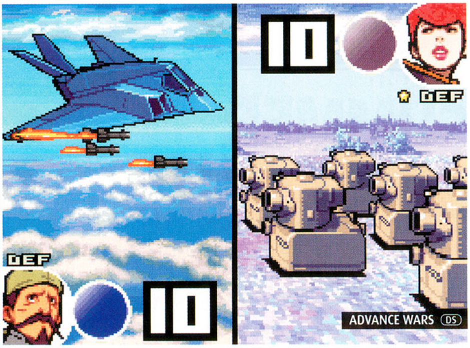
Zooo is a perfectly serviceable, thoroughly uninteresting puzzle game from the people who brought you the similarly unremarkable Zoo Keeper for the DS. As in that game, you're presented with an 8 x 8 grid of various animal icons, and you must swap adjacent panels to create rows or columns of three or more identical critters. Zooo could have been a nice change of pace from your typical falling-block affair, but the developers didn't do enough with the concept to keep things interesting beyond the first 15 minutes. The bland visuals and grating music certainly don't help matters. The game may keep toddlers entertained, but so might an empty box (which is a heck of a lot cheaper). —STEVE T.



SHAMAN KING GBA

JUKA GBA

DRAGON BALL GT GBA



ADVANCE WARS DS

SHAMAN KING: MASTER OF SPIRITS 2

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Game Boy Advance**
PUBLISHER: **Konami**
DEVELOPER: **Konami**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

Like its predecessor, Master of Spirits 2 is basically Castlevania light. (That's high praise as licensed GBA games go.) It shares the same look and feel as Konami's classic vampire-slaying series, and you'll obtain new powers over the course of the game that you'll need to explore previously inaccessible areas (a trait recent Castlevania titles have borrowed from Metroid). If you're a Shaman King junkie, the reasonably lengthy adventure is likely well worth your hard-earned cash. Unfortunately, the game doesn't seem terribly interested in drawing the rest of us in. It constantly introduces new characters without providing any context or background, leaving the uninitiated feeling confused and disengaged. It's still fun; just not nearly as compelling as its source of inspiration. —**Steve T.**

DRAGON BALL GT: TRANSFORMATION

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: **Game Boy Advance**
PUBLISHER: **Atari**
DEVELOPER: **Webfoot**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

It's almost always true that Dragon Ball fans will enjoy a Dragon Ball game far more than a regular gamer will—unfortunately, Transformation is no exception. The level design is straightforward to a fault—hack through waves of enemies and reach a tyrannical boss, then defeat him to regain a Dragon Ball. Your performance on the level will allow you to unlock many new characters and secrets, and you can replay any level over and over again. By creating a simple side-scrolling brawler, Webfoot tried to open the game to players who don't have a PhD in the franchise, but the bizarre characters and storyline are enough to make the uninitiated scratch their heads in total confusion. —**Chris S.**

JUKA AND THE MONOPHONIC MENACE

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: **Game Boy Advance**
PUBLISHER: **Orbital Media**
DEVELOPER: **Orbital Media**
ESRB: **Everyone**

I really, really wanted to like Juka. After having played Orbital's Racing Gears Advance, I had high hopes. Unfortunately, Juka fails to convey the same savvy and immediate fun that Racing Gears does. The primary concern with Juka is that the gameplay gets bogged down with repetitive tasks—shaking trees and swimming through ponds to collect ingredients, then making one-time-use potions from these ingredients takes up the lion's share of game time, and the outcome is usually underwhelming. The adventure's storyline is too bizarre to follow and side quests requiring you to search for special items are so frequent that you forget your primary goals. The graphics are a bright point in an otherwise dull experience—Orbital continues to take the Game Boy Advance's graphics to new amazing levels. —**Chris S.**

WAR IS HEAVEN

ADVANCE WARS: DUAL STRIKE

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Nintendo**
DEVELOPER: **Intelligent Systems**
ESRB: **Everyone**

Although Advance Wars 2: Black Hole Rising may have been more appropriately titled Advance Wars 1.5 due to its close resemblance to the original, fans still loved it. That's because Advance Wars is one of the best turn-based strategy series around, boasting complex yet easy-to-understand game mechanics. If it ain't broke, dont fix it, right? But Advance Wars: Dual Strike pulls off a mix of respecting the old while pushing ahead with the new.

AWDS has what Advance Wars 2 lacked: a substantial number of new unit types. The Stealth Bomber, for example, is one of the coolest units in AWDS, allowing you to hide in midair (similar to how the Submarine dives underwater) and attack while invisible. But AWDS goes beyond simply adding content to the series. There are changes to the gameplay, including the ability to assign two COs to one army. You can swap COs at the end of each day, and once their power meters are full, they can perform a Dual Strike. This element adds a nice new level of complexity to the game, and the more COs you enlist along the way, the more challenging pairing them up becomes.

AWDS is the first strategy game on the DS, and it incorporates the hardware's functionality in some interesting ways, including the option to play through the game using only the stylus. This feature works well for certain aspects of the game (the map maker in particular). I found it more comfortable to play the old-school way, but it's nice to have a choice.

AWDS also makes good use of the second screen to keep the all-important stat information off the battlefield. The only major drawback to AWDS is the unrealized dual-front battles, in which you must send units from the main front to another battle taking place on the top screen. Control is limited on the secondary battlefield, and units cannot return to the main front once you deploy them. You aren't faced with this type of battle very often, but when you are, it's more of a nuisance than a fun challenge.

Overall, though, Dual Strike is a solid affair. The graphics and sound are great, the campaign is massive, and the multiplayer modes (which include a single-cartridge wireless real-time game) are a blast. As the first strategy game on a system that many speculate will revolutionize the genre, AWDS sets the bar high. —**Andy M.**

ALLIED NATIONS ★ ALLIED NATIONS ★ ALLIED NATIONS
ALLIED NATIONS
RACHEL

[ARCHIVE]

SUMMER SPACE-OUT

If you haven't been flattened by the Madden blitz this month, you might want to check out a pair of highly rated twists on a classic genre. Sigma Star Saga for the GBA (see Steven G.'s notes) and Nanostray for the DS both belong in the serious space-shooter fan's library.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius: The Attack of the Twonkies	4.0	THQ	186	E
Alien Hominid	6.5	O~3	187	T
Amazing Island	5.5	Sega	184	E
Animaniacs: The Great Edgar Hunt	3.0	Ignition	190	E
Bad Boys: Miami Takedown	2.5	Empire Interactive	185	M
Baten Kaitos: Eternal Wings and the Lost Ocean	9.0	Namco	187	T
Batman Begins	6.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adventures	4.5	Activision	189	T
Call of Duty: Finest Hour	7.0	Activision	187	T
Catwoman	4.5	Electronic Arts	184	T
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	2.5	Global Star	195	E
Def Jam: Fight for NY	7.5	Electronic Arts	186	M
Digimon Rumble Arena 2	6.0	Bandai	185	T
Digimon World 4	7.0	Bandai	193	E
Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	9.0	Nintendo	191	E 10+
Donkey Konga	8.5	Nintendo	185	E
Donkey Konga 2	7.5	Nintendo	192	T
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	5.0	Atari	188	T
Dragon Ball Z: Sagas	5.5	Atari	192	T
Dreamworks' Shark Tale	4.5	Activision	185	E
The Fairly OddParents!: Shadow Showdown	4.5	THQ	185	E
Fantastic Four	6.0	Activision	194	T
FIFA Soccer 2005	8.5	Electronic Arts	186	E
FIFA Street	6.0	Electronic Arts	191	E
Fight Night: Round 2	8.0	Electronic Arts	191	T
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	5.5	Electronic Arts	188	T
Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life	7.5	Natsume	195	E
The Incredibles	7.0	THQ	186	T
Intellivision Lives!	3.0	Crave	187	E
International golf and tennis	3.0	Ignition	193	E
Killer 7	8.5	Capcom	193	M
King Arthur	4.5	Konami	187	T
Knights of the Temple	5.0	Aspyr	194	M
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	7.0	Activision	188	E
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	6.5	Electronic Arts	187	T
Madagascar	6.0	Activision	194	E 10+
Madden NFL 2005	9.0	Electronic Arts	184	E
Madden NFL 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	195	E
Mario Party 6	7.5	Nintendo	188	E
Mario Power Tennis	7.0	Nintendo	187	E
MC Groovz: Dancecraze	5.0	Mad Catz	189	E
Medal of Honor: European Assault	8.0	Electronic Arts	194	T
Mega Man X: Command Mission	6.5	Capcom	186	E
Metroid Prime 2 Echoes	9.5	Nintendo	187	T
Midway Arcade Treasures 2	7.5	Midway	188	M
Mortal Kombat: Deception	7.5	Midway	191	M
MVP Baseball 2005	9.0	Electronic Arts	191	E
NASCAR 2005: Chase for the Cup	7.5	Electronic Arts	185	E
NBA Live 2005	7.5	Electronic Arts	186	E
NBA Street V3	7.5	Electronic Arts	190	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	7.5	Electronic Arts	188	E
NFL Street 2	7.0	Electronic Arts	189	E
NHL 2005	7.0	Electronic Arts	186	E
Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door	9.0	Nintendo	186	E
Phantasy Star Online: Episode I & II Plus	5.5	Sega	184	T
Pikmin 2	9.5	Nintendo	184	E
Pinball Hall of Fame	4.5	Crave	189	E
The Polar Express	5.0	THQ	187	E
Power Rangers: Dino Thunder	5.0	THQ	186	E
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	9.0	Ubisoft	188	M
Rave Master	5.0	Konami	192	T
Resident Evil 4	10.0	Capcom	189	M
Robots	5.0	VU Games	190	E
Scaler	6.5	Global Star	188	E
Second Sight	9.5	Codemasters	185	T
Sonic Gems Collection	8.5	Sega	195	E
The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie	7.0	THQ	186	E
Spyro: A Hero's Tail	5.5	VU Games	187	E
SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	7.5	Namco	185	T
Star Fox: Assault	8.0	Nintendo	189	T
Strike Force Bowling	4.5	Crave	190	E
Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams	8.0	THQ	186	E
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Melee	3.0	Konami	192	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2: Battle Nexus	4.0	Konami	186	T
Terminator 3: The Redemption	7.5	Atari	185	T
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005	8.5	Electronic Arts	186	E
TimeSplitters: Future Perfect	8.5	Electronic Arts	191	M
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 2	4.5	Ubisoft	192	T
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	8.0	Ubisoft	192	M
Tony Hawk's Underground 2: World Destruction Tour	7.5	Activision	186	T
Trigger Man	1.0	Crave	186	T
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue	5.0	Electronic Arts	186	E
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.0	Electronic Arts	187	T
Viewtiful Joe 2	9.0	Capcom	187	T
Virtua Quest	5.5	Sega	189	T
WWE: Day of Reckoning	8.0	THQ	185	T
X-Men Legends	8.0	Activision	186	T
Zoids: Battle Legends	3.5	Atari	185	T

NINTENDO DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Asphalt Urban GT	6.5	Ubisoft	188	E
Bomberman	7.0	Ubisoft	194	E
Feel the Magic: XY/XX	9.0	Sega	188	T
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	6.0	Electronic Arts	195	T
Kirby: Canvas Curse	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madden NFL 2005	7.5	Electronic Arts	188	E
Meteos	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
Mr. Driller: Drill Spirits	7.0	Namco	188	E
Nanostray	8.0	Majesco	195	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	6.0	Electronic Arts	193	E
Pac-Pix	8.0	Namco	192	E
Ping Pals	5.0	THQ	188	E
Pokémon Dash	5.0	Nintendo	191	E
Polarium	7.5	Nintendo	192	E
Puyo Pop Fever	6.0	Atlus	193	E
Rayman DS	6.5	Ubisoft	191	E
Retro Atari Classics	5.0	Atari	191	E
Ridge Racer DS	7.0	Namco	188	E
Robots	4.5	VU Games	190	E
Spider-Man 2	6.5	Activision	188	E
Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	8.0	Ubisoft	194	T
Sprung	7.5	Ubisoft	188	T
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	8.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+

REVIEWER NOTES

SIGMA STAR SAGA

Games like SSS are made so rarely that it seems like a miracle. It's a crazy hybrid (half RPG, half space-shooter) with a smart plot (a sci-fi take on the classic tale of a slave climbing the ranks to overthrow an empire). And it tackles the tabloid details of alien-human love with equal parts hormones and humor. Though slightly wonky as a shooter, SSS is a major GBA surprise. —Steven G.

>WARIOWARE: TWISTED!

While every game in the series has been fun in its own regard, Twisted brought WarioWare into its own, mirroring eccentric game content with eccentric play control. Absolutely brilliant.

—Andy M.

FUEGO
7
3
TSU

SEGA SOCCER SLAM

Every time Mario Strikers gets brought up, someone mentions Sega Soccer Slam, so I went back and played it again. I had a blast. I'd forgotten how fun and challenging it was, as well as how much style the game had, without needing real-life players and teams. If Mario Strikers is half as fun as Soccer Slam, we're in for an absolute treat. —Chris S.

>DONKEY KONG JUNGLE BEAT

Though tragically short, DKJB is a gorgeous, wonderfully innovative side-scroller that proves the genre still has some life left in it on home consoles. More, please.

—Steve T.

Title	Score	Publisher	Vol.	ESRB
Super Mario 64 DS	8.5	Nintendo	188	E
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005	8.0	Electronic Arts	188	E
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.5	Electronic Arts	188	E
WarioWare: Touched!	9.0	Nintendo	190	E
World Championship Poker: Deluxe Series	5.0	Crave	192	E
Yoshi Touch & Go	7.0	Nintendo	191	E
Zoo Keeper	4.5	Ignition	189	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
Ace Combat Advance	4.0	Namco	190	E
Advance Guardian Heroes	7.5	Ubisoft	185	E
The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius: The Attack of the Twonkies	4.0	THQ	185	E
Animaniacs: Lights! Camera! Action!	4.5	Ignition	190	E
Around the World in 80 Days	4.0	Hip Interactive	184	E
Astro Boy: Omega Factor	9.0	Sega	184	E
Backyard Basketball	4.5	Atari	186	E
Banjo Pilot	7.0	THQ	189	E
Batman Begins	5.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
Boktai 2: Solar Boy Django	7.5	Konami	185	T
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adventures	2.0	Activision	188	T
Cartoon Network Block Party	3.0	Majesco	185	E
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	3.5	Global Star	195	E
Classic NES Series Castlevania	8.5	Nintendo	186	E
Classic NES Series Dr. Mario	7.0	Nintendo	186	E
Classic NES Series Metroid	8.0	Nintendo	186	E
Classic NES Series Zelda II: The Adventure of Link	7.0	Nintendo	186	E
Codename Kids Next Door—Operation S.O.D.A.	4.5	Global Star	187	E
Crushed Baseball	2.5	Summitsoft	186	E
Dead to Rights	5.0	Destination	187	T
Digimon Racing	5.5	Bandai	184	E
Disney's Herbie: Fully Loaded	5.5	Disney Interactive	194	E
Disney's Kim Possible III: Team Possible	6.5	Disney Interactive	195	E
Disney's Magical Quest 3 Starring Mickey & Donald	5.5	Capcom	194	E
Donkey Kong Country 2	6.5	Nintendo	187	E
Dragon Ball Z: Buu's Fury	7.0	Atari	185	E
Dreamworks' Shark Tale	4.5	Activision	185	E
Duel Masters: Kaijudo Showdown	4.0	Atari	187	E
Elf	2.0	Crave	187	E
F/A 18F: Super Hornet	3.5	Majesco	188	E
F-Zero—GP Legend	7.5	Nintendo	185	E
The Fairly OddParents!: Shadow Showdown	4.0	THQ	186	E
Fantastic Four	6.5	Activision	194	E 10+
Fear Factor Unleashed	3.0	Hip Interactive	187	T
FIFA Soccer 2005	7.0	Electronic Arts	186	E
Final Fantasy I & II: Dawn of Souls	8.5	Square Enix	187	E
Finding Nemo: The Continuing Adventures	3.5	THQ	186	E
Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones	9.0	Nintendo	193	E
Golden Nugget Casino	2.0	Majesco	188	E
Grand Theft Auto Advance	7.5	Rockstar	186	M
Gundam Seed: Battle Assault	5.0	Bandai	186	T
Harvest Moon: More Friends of Mineral Town	8.5	Natsume	195	E
Hot Wheels: Stunt Track Challenge	6.0	THQ	188	E
Hugo: The Evil Mirror	3.0	Namco	192	E
The Incredibles	6.0	THQ	186	E
It's Mr. Pants	6.5	THQ	187	E
James Pond Codename Robocod	4.0	Valcon Games	195	E
Kill.Switch	6.0	Destination	185	T
Killer 3-D Pool	4.0	Destination	192	E
Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories	7.5	Square Enix	188	E
Kirby & The Amazing Mirror	8.0	Nintendo	186	E
Klonoa 2: Dream Champ Tournament	8.5	Namco	190	E
The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap	9.5	Nintendo	189	E
LEGO Knights' Kingdom	5.0	THQ	187	E
LEGO *Star Wars*	6.5	Eidos	192	E
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	6.0	Activision	186	E
Lilo and Stitch 2: Hamsterviel Havoc	5.5	Buena Vista	185	E
Lizzie McGuire 2	3.5	Buena Vista	186	E
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	8.0	Electronic Arts	187	T
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madden NFL 2005	6.0	Electronic Arts	184	E
Mario Party Advance	6.0	Nintendo	191	E
Mario Pinball Land	7.5	Nintendo	186	E
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team Colonel & Team Protoman	6.5	Capcom	194	E
Mega Man Zero 3	7.5	Capcom	186	E
Metal Slug Advance	8.5	SNK	188	T
Monopoly	5.0	Destination	188	E
Monster Trucks	3.5	Majesco	189	E
Mr. Driller 2	5.0	Namco	193	E
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	6.0	Destination	185	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	5.0	Electronic Arts	187	E
Nicktoons: Freeze Frame Frenzy	4.5	THQ	186	E
Pac-Man Pinball Advance	7.0	Namco	193	E
Pac-Man World	6.0	Destination	188	E
Pokémon Emerald	6.5	Nintendo	192	E
Pokémon FireRed and Pokémon LeafGreen	9.0	Nintendo	184	E
The Polar Express	5.5	THQ	187	E
Popeye: Rush for Spinach	5.0	Namco	193	E
Power Rangers: Dino Thunder	4.0	THQ	186	E
Racing Gears Advance	7.5	Orbital Media	189	E
Rapala Pro Fishing	3.5	Activision	186	E
Rayman: Hoodlum's Revenge	5.5	Ubisoft	191	E
Riviera: The Promised Land	6.5	Atlus	194	T
Robots	4.5	VU Games	190	E
Rugrats: All Grown Up! —Express Yourself	4.0	THQ	186	E
Scrabble Blast	7.5	Destination	193	E
SD Gundam Force	5.5	Bandai	186	E
Shaman King: Legacy of the Spirits—Soaring Hawk/ Sprinting Wolf	3.5	Konami	191	E
Shaman King: Master of Spirits	7.0	Konami	184	E
Shrek 2: Beg For Mercy	4.5	Activision	188	E
Sigma Star Saga	8.5	Namco	195	E10+
Smashing Drive	4.5	Destination	188	E
The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie	5.0	THQ	186	E
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	7.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Star Wars Trilogy: Apprentice of the Force	5.5	Ubisoft	185	E
Strawberry Shortcake: Summertime Adventure	3.0	Majesco	189	E
Super Army War	6.5	Atlus	190	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2: Battle Nexus	6.0	Konami	186	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker	3.0	Majesco	188	E
That's So Raven	2.0	Buena Vista	186	E
Thunder Alley	1.5	XS Games	184	E
Thunderbirds	3.0	VU Games	186	E
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Advance	3.5	Crave	193	E
Tony Hawk's Underground 2: World Destruction Tour	6.5	Activision	186	E
Tron 2.0: Killer Ap	7.0	Buena Vista	185	E
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue	4.5	Electronic Arts	187	E
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.5	Electronic Arts	187	E
WarioWare: Twisted!	8.5	Nintendo	193	E
World Championship Poker	3.5	Crave	188	E
WWE Survivor Series	3.0	THQ	187	T
Yoshi Topsi-Turvy	7.0	Nintendo	194	E
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Destiny Board Traveler	2.5	Konami	188	E
Yu Yu Hakusho: Tournament Tactics	3.0	Atari	187	E
Zoids: Legacy	4.5	Atari	185	E

>PAC-PIX

The beauty of Pac-Pix is that your creation will come to life and perform no matter how skilled an artist you are. And watching a jacked-up-looking Pac-Man hobble around the screen is just as entertaining as it sounds.

—Andy M.

BATMAN BEGINS

Movie footage and actors' likenesses make Batman Begins a suitable companion to the film. In fact, since the game is as linear as it gets, playing it is like watching an extended cut of the movie. When the grapple icon appears, you grapple. When the special-move icon appears, you execute a special move. It's professionally developed, Batman-branded entertainment. It just feels like the developers didn't trust players enough to make them fully vested participants.

—George S.

>TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES (GCN)

What's going on with this franchise? I grew up loving TMNT, and to see my four favorite reptiles get this kind of weak treatment makes me want to crawl back into my shell.

—Chris S.

METEOS

I'm not the biggest puzzle-game fan, but Meteos has managed to keep me hooked for weeks. Collecting blocks to unlock new planets is incredibly addictive, as are the frantic multiplayer battles. Few things in life bring me as much joy as causing the annihilation of my co-workers' home planets. If any of your friends own a DS, Meteos is a definite must-buy.

—Steve T.

MOVIES

The Real World, Sort Of

Whether they're soaking up laughs or angering masses, the members of Mega64 are having a blast acting out video games for unsuspecting audiences.

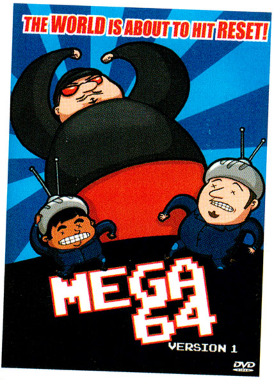
Video game communities often sprout from wild ideas, but they're usually only as successful as the software they represent. (You don't see Superman 64 fan clubs popping up all over the place now, do you?) But the crew of Mega64 has a way of taking the good and bad aspects of a video game and turning them into comedy. And the best part about Mega64? Their skits are genuinely funny.

Mega64 is an episodic show similar in concept to *Jackass*, but video game-related. The project was created by Rocco Botte, who admits that boredom was his biggest inspiration. "I thought it was about time to dive into an amalgamation of everything I've ever loved—video games, writing, acting, hanging out with friends, and getting weird reactions from people," explains Botte. He hooked up with friends Derrick Acosta, Shawn Chatfield and Ian Luckey, and started creating comedy sketches in which the crew would act out video game scenarios in public places. Botte strung the sketches together with a supporting story: a mad scientist named Dr. Poque kidnaps two teenagers and forces them to beta-test his creation, the Mega64 (a fictional console that mixes the video game world and the real world inside a player's brain). Before long, clips of Rocco and Co.'s creations began circulating the Web (we first heard of the group through an often-fowarded e-mail featuring a Shenmue parody), and whamo!—Mega64 had a fan base. Though the episodes were originally intended for public-access television, a DVD deal (*Mega64: Version 1*) materialized due to the group's rising Internet popularity.

Don't mistake Mega64's antics with other half-hearted parody efforts. The crew puts a lot of preparation and thought into its sketches in an attempt to get the best possible reactions from bystanders. "We typically like the fact that people don't know what's happening," Botte says, "but every now and then it's cool when they do." In their Luigi's Mansion-based skit, Acosta scuttled around a haunted-house tourist attraction during business hours, trying to suck up ghosts with a dustbuster. Botte recalls "[We] hoped we'd either annoy people or get a disgruntled employee to kick us out. We got both."

Though the Mega64 team members have never gotten into any serious trouble with their antics, they have had the cops called on them multiple times, and been threatened by a guy with a baseball bat. But that won't stop them from doing what they love. As for the future, *Mega64* is hard at work on its *Mega64: Version 2* DVD, which (judging by what we've seen) is even funnier than the first. —ANDY M.

> **"We typically like the fact that [bystanders] don't know what's happening..."**
>
> —Rocco Botte, Creator


THE WORLD IS ABOUT TO HIT RESET!
MEGA 64
VERSION 1
DVD

Mega Moments

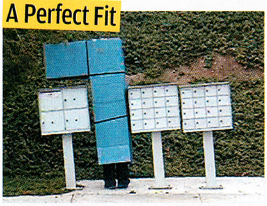
Haunted House-Cleaning

It's not quite the Poltergust 3000, but it'll do.

Run, Mario, Run!

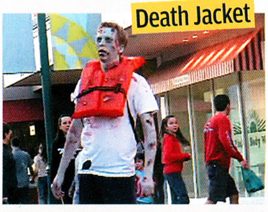
What in the heck were those red and white creatures from Super Mario Bros. 2, anyway?

A Perfect Fit



If only the world were as simple as a Tetris board (before it reaches 30 or 40 lines, that is).

Death Jacket

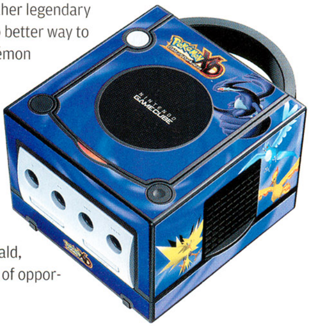


A life jacket probably won't do a Resident Evil zombie much good.

Slap Me Some Pokémon Skin!

The big Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness presell event is about to begin!

Starting August 28, you'll be able to reserve your copy of the game at participating retailers. When you do, you'll receive a Pokémon XD skin for Nintendo GameCube featuring the game logo and images of Shadow Lugia and other legendary Pokémon. There's no better way to battle opposing Pokémon Trainers than with a Pokémon-skinned GCN. And since you and your friends can import your favorite teams from Pokémon Ruby, Sapphire, FireRed, LeafGreen and Emerald, you'll never be short of opportunities. —Chris S.



Are You Ready to Rock?

The Pokémon Rocks America Tour is coming to a town near you! Each event will feature stage shows, playable games, including the opportunity to battle other Trainers, and Pokémon Trading Card Game clinics. There will also be special Pokémon giveaways, including the Mystic Ticket to catch Ho-Oh and Lugia for your Pokémon Emerald, FireRed and LeafGreen game paks. All of the venues are indoors, so you can guarantee they'll happen, rain or shine. And best of all, the entire event is free! —Chris S.

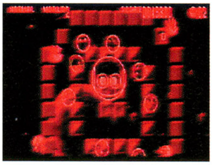
visit www.pokemon.com

Date	Location	Venue
9/17	San Jose, CA	McEnery Convention Center
10/1	Phoenix, AZ	Phoenix Civic Plaza Convention Center
10/8	Dallas, TX	Dallas Market Center
10/15	Chicago, IL	Navy Pier
10/22	Boston, MA	Bayside Expo Center

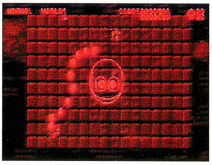
COLLECTING

Virtual Boy's Unsung Hero

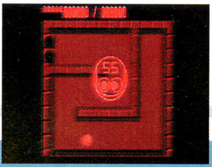
There were a handful of titles in development for the Virtual Boy at the time of its demise in 1996, but Bound High rises above the bunch. We recently got our hands on a rare Bound High prototype, and though the game was never released, its quality would have ranked it among the top two or three VB games. Bound High gave us a glimpse of what the console was capable of, pushing 3-D gaming further than most VB games. Bound High's story mode begins in a movie theater (much like Viewtiful Joe) with an audience watching *The Adventures of Chalvo*. Soon after, you're thrown into the action, controlling Chalvo (a bouncing ball) in top-down view as he hops around different boards, knocking enemies off the edge. The bouncing physics are spot-on: Chalvo shoots toward and away from the camera perfectly fluidly. The game even has fun boss battles and additional game modes. Supposedly no copies of Bound High exist outside the walls of Nintendo, though it's hard to say for sure. There was a follow-up game of a different nature called Chalvo 55 for the Game Boy, but it was released only in Japan. —Andy M.



To clear a board in Bound High, you must bounce on enemies and knock them off an edge. The direction you bounce back depends on which side of an enemy you land on.



Boss battles in Bound High don't break out of bouncing mode, but they do force you to approach your strategy differently.



In one of the game's more-fun minigames, you must bounce objects into pockets within a specified time limit.

EVENTS

Listen to the Music

Fog machines, lasers and enormous game screens—L.A.'s Hollywood Bowl was awash in special effects for the debut performance of this summer's Video Games Live orchestral tour.

Performing music spanning the entire history of video games, the prestigious Los Angeles Philharmonic wowed the audience for over two hours. The often unheralded talents of game-music composers were put on amazing display by the talented orchestra.

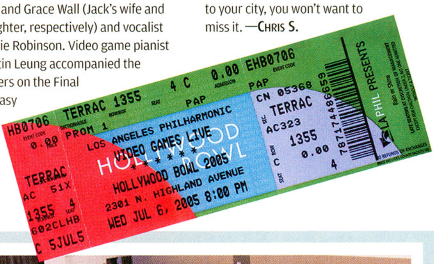
Over 11,000 people, including video game luminaries such as Metal Gear Solid creator Hideo Kojima and Atari founder Nolan Bushnell attended the debut concert. Many game-music composers were in attendance, as well, such as Jason Hayes of Warcraft and Christophe Heral of Beyond Good & Evil. Tommy Tallarico and Jack Wall, themselves game composers, hosted the festivities.

Some of the video game icons on hand introduced the music from the games they worked on. Sonic the Hedgehog creator Yuji Naka appeared for the first time at an American public event to introduce an amazing collection of Sonic songs. The compilation was performed in chronological order, all the way up to the soon-to-be-released Shadow the Hedgehog. Although Nintendo's own musical genius Koji Kondo wasn't able to make it to the concert in person he introduced his compositions, the music from The Legend of Zelda and Super Mario Bros., via taped broadcast.

The nearly two dozen musical selections were pulled from all corners of the video game world, new and old. The show kicked off with a medley of famous themes from vintage arcade games like Defender and Tempest, as well as an arrangement of sounds similar to the crazy blips and beeps of Pong and other seminal games. Video game music's computer-created origins make the tunes, especially older scores, notoriously difficult to perform live—which makes the orchestra's execution even more amazing. Performances from modern titles such as Beyond Good & Evil and Kingdom Hearts juxtaposed superbly with scores from classic franchises like Mario Bros. and Castlevania.

And the show wasn't limited to performances by the orchestra alone. Several pieces, including those from Final Fantasy, Medal of Honor and Myst, featured solo arias from Cindy Wall and Grace Wall (Jack's wife and daughter, respectively) and vocalist Laurie Robinson. Video game pianist Martin Leung accompanied the singers on the Final Fantasy theme with stunning, graceful arpeggios. On some tunes, actors portrayed scenes from various games, including an intricate acrobatic chase between Snake and a guard during the Metal Gear Solid music.

Because of the concert's amazing success, the rest of the Video Games Live tour schedule is being tweaked to accommodate the massive response. Check out videogameslive.com for locations and times—if the tour comes to your city, you won't want to miss it. —**Chris S.**



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LAPHIL PRESENTS
Rain or Shine

Smash Takes Over

Shortly after our Smash Planet article (which explored the thriving Super Smash Bros. Melee community) appeared in last month's Nintendo Power, the community held the most important SSBM tournament to date, Melee FC3. Over 200 of the world's best Smashers from 30 states, the UK and the Netherlands gathered in South Bend, Indiana, for the monumental event. The weekend's biggest winner was Ken Hoang, who walked away with $1,200 in prizes. Ken used a combination of Marth, Dr. Mario and Ganondorf to emerge victorious. The second- and third-place winners battled with Peach and Ice Climbers.

The highlight of the tournament was a US regional championship in which the east, west, south and midwest competed for glory. In the end, the east emerged victorious, making it the division to beat at next year's tournament (which hopefully will center around a newer Smash Bros. game). —**Andy M.**

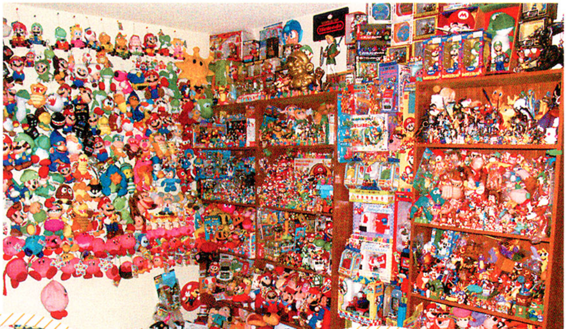
COLLECTING

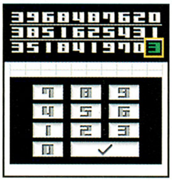
For Love of the Game

Brett Martin of Colorado started with a small set of Mario figurines displayed in his college dorm room. As you can see, his collection has grown substantially since then, taking up four full bookcases and two walls. Though anything game-related is fair game for Brett's collection, he sticks mostly to collecting toys based on characters that have thrived on Nintendo systems. Mario, Link, Kirby and Mega Man hog the majority of Brett's display space.

So why collect video game-related merchandise over video games themselves? Brett has a good reason. He is working toward becoming an artist in the video game industry, and his collection (which resides in his office) inspires his work. Maybe he's overdone it, but at least he gets good responses from folks who see it. "I always get a 'Holy Cow!' or 'Holy Buckets!' or something with 'holy' in it from friends," says Martin. Brett considers his four-and-a-half-foot Mario statue to be the jewel of his collection. —ANDY M.

> **"I always get a 'Holy Cow!' or 'Holy Buckets!' or something with 'holy' in it from friends."**
>
> **—Brett Martin, Obsessive Collector**





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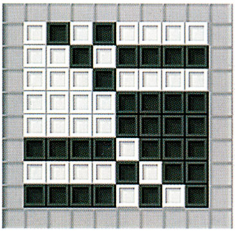
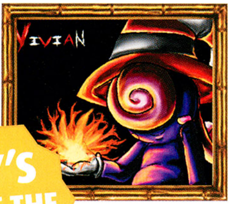


Can you solve this puzzle designed by *~Yoshi~*?

Do-It-Yourself

Ambitious Polarium custom puzzle makers have begun posting their devilish creations on the Nintendo.com forums, and they're way harder than anything we could make (see Quiz, p.110). Enter the 30-digit codes into your Polarium game and try them out yourself. When you have those mastered, share your own puzzles online, as well.

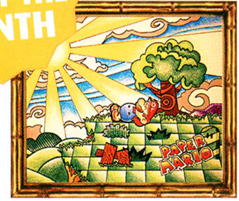
JULY'S ART OF THE MONTH



ARTIST:
sagewitch03

SUBJECT:
Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door

Computer-Drawn Category



ARTIST:
rickyfluffle88

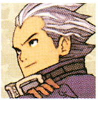
SUBJECT:
Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door

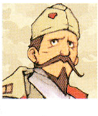
Hand-Drawn Category

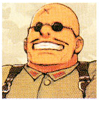
July was one of the best months for fan art in a long time. It looks like Paper Mario really brings out the best in our online artists. Submit your fan art to **forums.nintendo.com**.

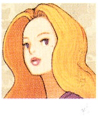
Custom-Made Avatars

By Jim Catechi









Sage Reviews

Keep those reviews rolling in! Due to popular demand, we're looking to make Sage reviews a little longer, so feel free to speak your mind. But remember to keep them to the point—your opinion is what matters the most!

Sage Review of the Month

Meteos

reviewed by
FIREEMBLEM54

Meteos very well may be the first "must have" title for the DS. Very rarely does a puzzle game succeed like this. The basic idea is a bit of a cliché—when blocks (known as Meteos) are lined up, they ignite and take off. However, a certain planet's gravity, as well as the distribution of the Meteos, may bring the stack crashing back down. Thirty-two different planets, each with their own unique characteristics, provide phenomenal replay value. Too add on to that value, the multiplayer mode is for the ages. As you go head to head with up to three friends, your launched Meteos will land on their screen, with the ultimate goal to flood your rivals' planets with Meteos to the point of explosion. The music, which varies from stage to stage, will often have you tapping your foot to the surprisingly catchy beats. The one negative side to this game is that when trying to meet requirements to unlock some of the many goodies, you'll find yourself playing the same stage over and over again. With four different modes of gameplay, countless unlockables, and a can't miss multiplayer, Meteos will hook nearly every gamer.

Excerpts from Other Sage Reviews

Riviera: The Promised Land
"Riviera is an awesome, original RPG with a story that makes it shine as one of the true gems for the Game Boy Advance."
—NICKDUDENICK

F-Zero GX
"Boasting flashy effects and smooth animation, players will be completely immersed in F-Zero's universe."
—GAMING_MASTER

What's a Sage?

Sages are members of the NSider online community that are put through the wringer and hand-picked by Nintendo. They get tons of special privileges, including opportunities to review games for Nintendo Power magazine.

Calling All Community Members

Have you ever borrowed the family video camera and accidentally recorded over your little brother's birthday party he had at the zoo? Was it to film reenactments of famous (or obscure) video game scenes with your friends? If so, we want to see your clips! E-mail us your digitized movies so we have something to watch besides that old Super Mario Bros. movie with Bob Hoskins. If they're Academy-worthy, we'll show some stills in Nintendo Power. Send all Community submissions to

community@nintendopower.com
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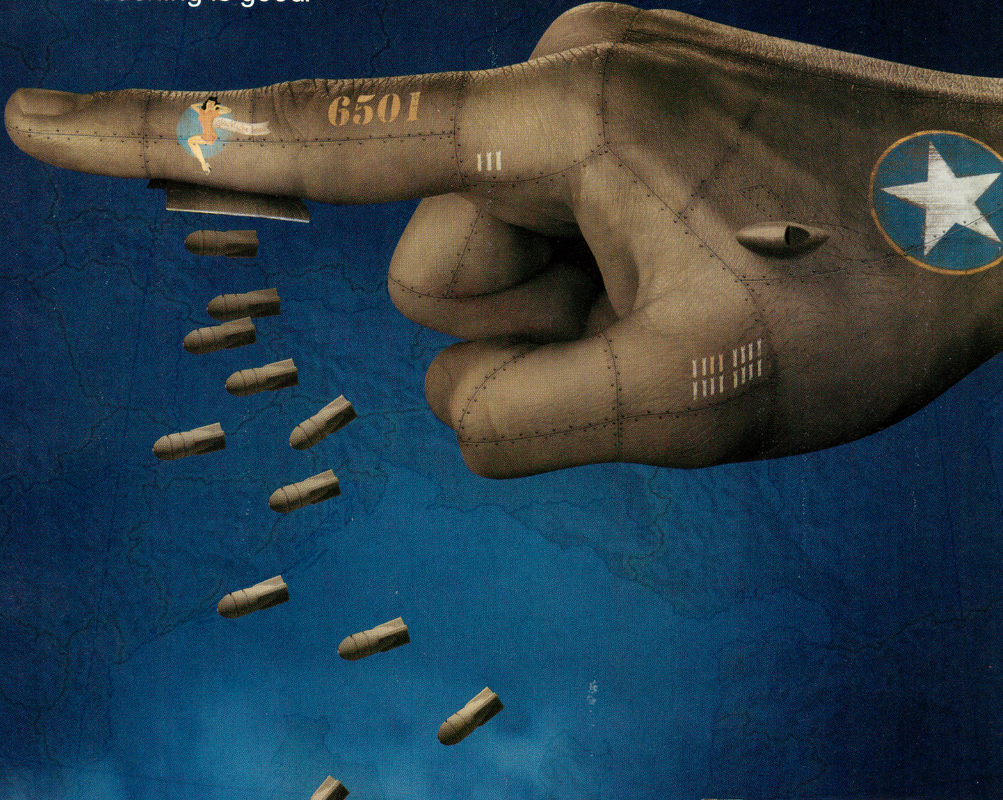

ADVANCE WARS DUAL STRIKE

The twisted Black Hole Army has returned, and this time you'll need both screens as the war rages on two fronts. It's up to you to command your troops on the ground, in the air and at sea as you engage in dual-screen combat in order to fend off the deadly invasion.

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SEPTEMBER 2005, VOLUME 195
Sega Goes Hog Wild (Shadow the Hedgehog, Sonic Rush, Sonic Gems Collection), Man's Best Friend (Nintendogs), The Agony and the XD (Pokémon XD), Bros. of Summer (Mario Superstar Baseball), Help Wanted (Trauma Center), The Zelda Demo, Inside Zelda, Out of Bounds?, Madden NFL 06, Kirby: Canvas Curse, Smash Bros. Melee, Prince of Persia 3, Mario Tennis Advance, Metroid Prime Pinball, NBA Live 06, WWE: Day of Reckoning 2, Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix

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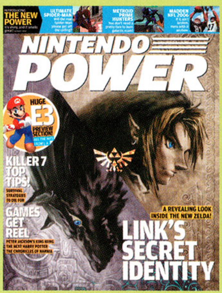
AUGUST 2005, VOLUME 194
Mario Kart DS, I Love LA (E3 Wrap-Up), Built to Last, Nintendo World, Historical License, Make Your Move, Lunar: Dragon Song, Meteos, Age of Empires: The Age of Kings, DK: King of Swing, Zoo Tycoon, The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction, One Piece, Zatch Bell!, Pac 'n Roll, Madden NFL 06, Inside Zelda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A REVEALING LOOK INSIDE THE NEW ZELDA!
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JULY 2005, VOLUME 193
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, Renaissance Mario, Not Lost in Translation, Killer 7, Pokémon Emerald, Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones, Animal Crossing DS, Nintendogs, Meteos, Trace Memory, Ultimate Spider-Man, Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance, Call of Duty 2: Big Red One, Medal of Honor: European Assault, Rebelstar: Tactical Command, Advance Wars: Dual Strike, Kirby: Canvas Curse, Shadow the Hedgehog, Snowboard Kids, GoldenEye: Rogue Agent, Electroplankton, Yoshi Topsy-Turvy, Nanostray, Spartan: Total Warrior, X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse, Inside Zelda

INSIDE ZELDA DEVELOPMENT
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JUNE 2005, VOLUME 192
Pokémon Emerald, Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory, Polarium, Need for Speed Underground 2, Geist, Inside Zelda Special, Shadow the Hedgehog, Donkey Konga 2, Super Year, *Star Wars* Episode III: Revenge of the Sith, Advance Wars DS, Shogun Warrior, Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones

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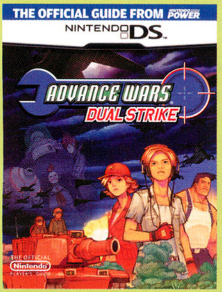
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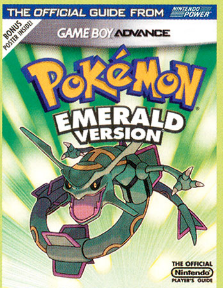
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NEXT MONTH

Knights, Spartans, heroines and Pokémon mix it up in November. Catch our blow-by-blow coverage.

STORM WARNING

Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness snags our cover next month. We'll investigate the mystery of Shadow Lugia and emerge with details on the RPG-style adventure and Colosseum battles.

RADIANT REVIEW

We get the jump on other mags with the first review of Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance.

THE XX FACTOR

Female fighters get their due in Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects. We celebrate with a picturesque preview.

BRITISH INVASION

NP's Steve Thomason travels to London and brings back the goods from Spartan: Total Warrior developer The Creative Assembly.

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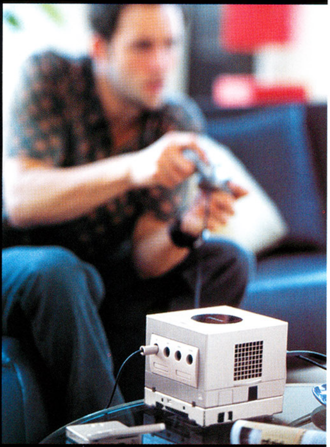

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Puppy play date. The secrets about Bark mode. **Pg. 11**

A day-by-day guide for the first month of puppy ownership. **Pg. 16**

Ask Dr. Paws! You've got questions. She's got answers. **Pg. 17**

Reality Bites

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Performing the seemingly impossible task of putting a pack of puppies into your Nintendo DS, Nintendogs gives one food for thought. Just how real are those critters on the other side of the screen? You can treat Nintendogs as if they were actual flesh and fur canines—train them, feed them and give them the attention that every dog desires. New Puppy magazine helps you do just that. Follow the advice within these pages, and your little buddy will be eating out of your hand!

NINTENDO DS

P. Pinscher

New Puppy
THE MAGAZINE

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Contents

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE NINTENDO KENNEL CLUB

IN THIS ISSUE:

FOR EVERY PERSON THERE'S A PUPPY 3

DOG DAY ONE 5

TEACHER'S PET 7

SHOW AND TELL 9

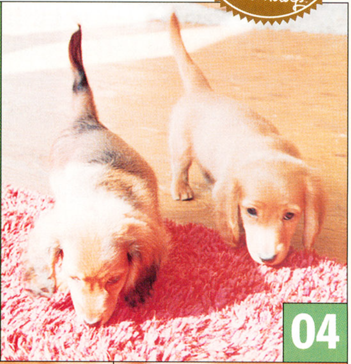
SHAKE! 11

BRINGING UP BABY 13

TALK TO THE ANIMALS 15

CALENDAR 16

ASK DR. PAWS 17



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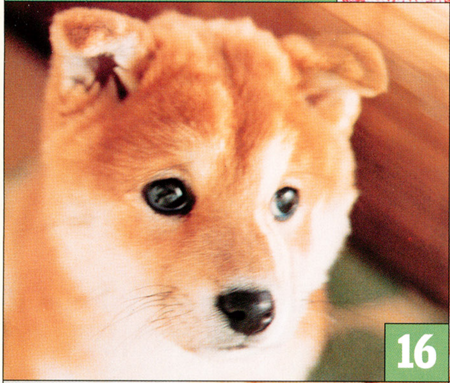

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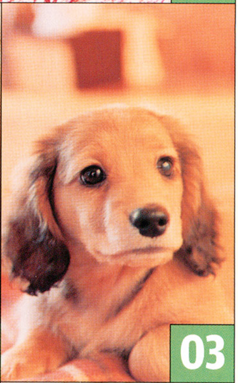

03

06

18

For every person, th

DO DOGS REALLY LOOK LIKE THEIR OWNERS? PICK ONE AND SEE THE SIMILARITIES.

By I.M. Furry

All puppies have an innate excitement and willingness to please, but there are very noticeable differences between the breeds, and between individual Nintendogs. Six breeds are available from the outset in each of the three versions of Nintendogs, though more will arrive as you earn Trainer Points and interface with other owners in Bark mode. The choices you make when you select your first pup will speak volumes about your own personality. Do you like docile intelligence or wigged-out happiness? Independence or a constant need for validation? Spend some time with each dog and pick the one that connects with you the most.

Labrador & Friends

Labrador Retriever
Miniature Pinscher
Toy Poodle
Pembroke Welsh Corgi
Miniature Schnauzer
Shiba Inu

NINTENDO DS
Includes:
Labrador Retriever
Miniature Schnauzer
Toy Poodle
Pembroke Welsh Corgi
Miniature Pinscher
Shiba Inu
nintendogs
Lab & Friends
EVERYONE
E
Nintendo

SMART CHOICE

Intelligent, gentle and kind, Labrador retrievers are duty-bound to serve their masters, and they can be bundles of pure energy as puppies. No wonder they're among the most popular dogs around!

NINTENDO DS
Includes:
Miniature Dachshund
Golden Retriever
Beagle
Pug
Siberian Husky
Shih Tzu
nintendogs
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EVERYONE
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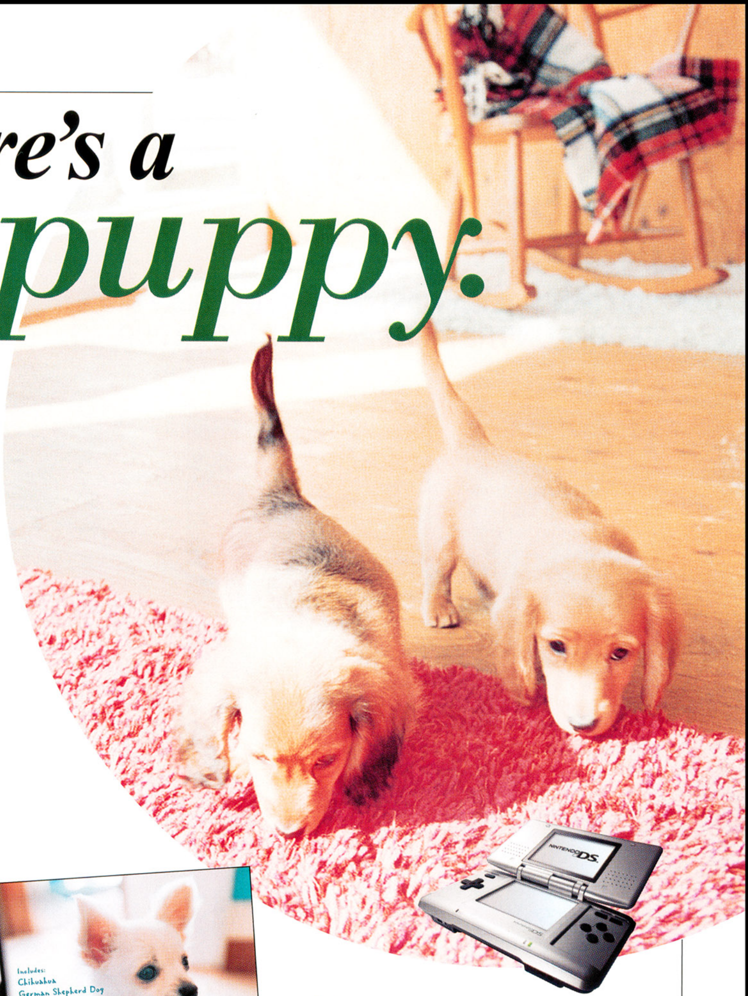
Dachshund & Friends

Miniature Dachshund
Golden Retriever
Beagle
Pug
Siberian Husky
Shih Tzu

HOT DOG!

Dachshunds' long bodies have caused some to call them wiener dogs, yet that hasn't kept the breed from having a bold, confident demeanor. Their highly attuned noses make them excellent hunters.

ere's a *puppy.*



NINTENDO DS
Includes:
Chihuahua
German Shepherd Dog
Boxer
Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
Yorkshire Terrier
Shetland Sheepdog
nintendogs™
Chihuahua & Friends
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E
ESRB
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Chihuahua & Friends

- **Chihuahua**
- **German Shepherd**
- **Boxer**
- **Cavalier K. C. Spaniel**
- **Yorkshire Terrier**
- **Shetland Sheepdog**

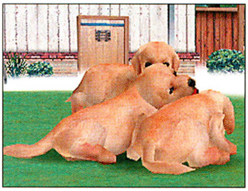
THE ULTIMATE INSIDER

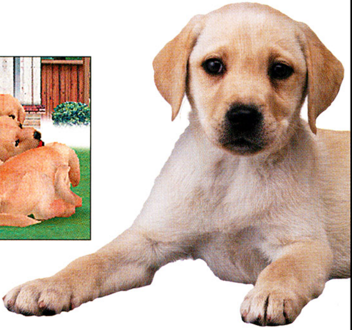
Dating all the way back to the age of the Aztecs, Chihuahuas are quick, playful and alert. They are well-suited for indoor living, but can get agitated in open spaces.

Dog Day One

YOU CAN MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION ONLY ONCE. GET OFF ON THE RIGHT PAW WITH YOUR PUP.

By Thirsten Howl

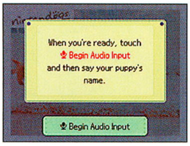




Puppies are impressionable and needy. There's no such thing as giving your dog too much attention. Calm it down, pet it and let it know that you're going to give it a good home. It'll respond in kind and at least try to behave.

YOU LOOK LIKE A...

Once your dog is familiar with its surroundings and has had some quality time with you, it will be calm enough for you to name it. Use its name often and continue to give it lots of attention.

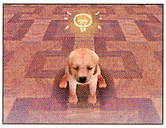


When you're ready, touch Begin Audio Input and then say your puppy's name.

Look at your new buddy. Think about what its name should be, clear your throat and record.

SPEAK!

When you talk into the microphone, speak clearly from about six inches away. Upon hearing its name for the first time, your dog will show acknowledgement by producing a lightbulb icon.



BUY THE BASICS

When you tap on your dog's name from the Home screen, you'll bring up its Status screen. Hunger, thirst and a dirty coat are status-screen conditions that you can take care of with items from the store.

SHOPPING LIST

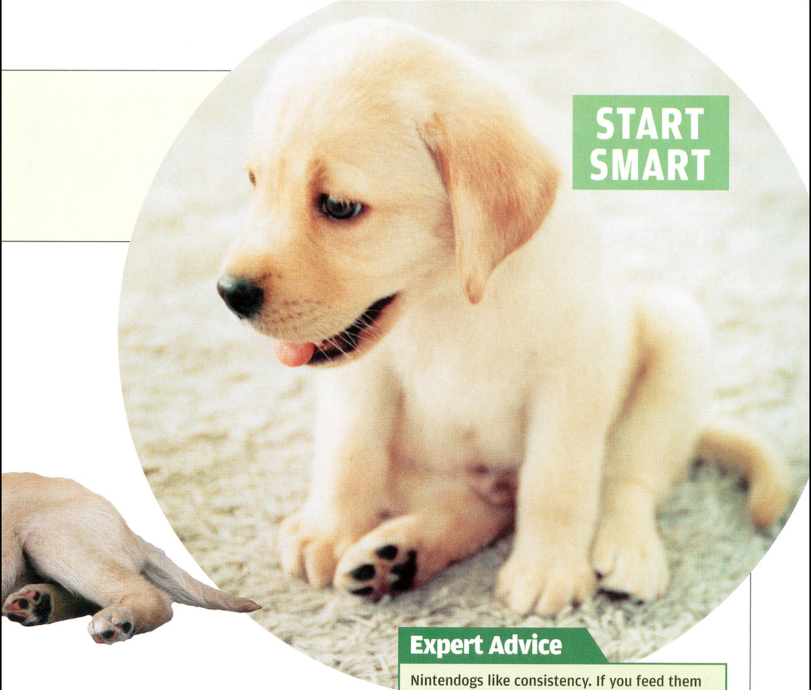
There are four must-have items in the store at the start. Buy the expendables in large quantities.

The less expensive of two food types (dry) will suffice.

Give your dog water with meals and after exercise.

Groom your pup with a rubber or wire brush.

If your dog is dirty, give it a bath with shampoo.



START SMART

Expert Advice

Nintendogs like consistency. If you feed them at the same time every day, you'll gain Trainer Points. You'll lose points if you neglect them for three days running.

YOU COMPLETE ME

Puppies have constant needs. Luckily, Nintendogs are more forgiving than most, but they still beg for your attention.

FEED AND WATER

By keeping your dog well-fed and quenched, you will have a happier pup who listens to your commands.

KEEP CLEAN

Shampoo and brush your dog regularly, and immediately before obedience trials.

CURB YOUR PET

On walks, your pup will produce solid waste. Tap the poop to put it in a bag and avoid the ire of other dog owners.

FOLLOW A DAILY ROUTINE

You can shirk your duties without major consequences, but it's best to stick to a daily schedule.

- ☒ FEED YOUR PUP DAILY
- ☒ GIVE IT WATER DAILY
- ☒ BATHE IT EVERY OTHER DAY
- ☒ BRUSH IT AFTER BATHING IT
- ☒ REINFORCE TRICKS DAILY
- ☒ TAKE YOUR DOG ON DAILY WALKS
- ☒ PRAISE YOUR POOCH CONSTANTLY

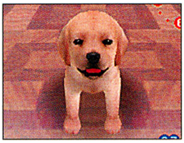
Teacher's Pet

PUPPIES LEARN QUICKLY AND RESPOND TO ENCOURAGEMENT.

By Ken U. Changethis

Teaching your dog tricks gives it a sense of responsibility and readies it for obedience trials, where you'll earn cash and points. The more you repeat a trick, the longer your dog will sustain it.

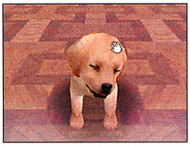
TEACH, REPEAT

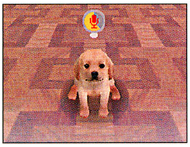


Dogs learn through repetition. When your pup performs a trick, record the trick's voice command. A lightbulb-shaped reward will appear—feed it to your puppy. After repeating a trick several times, your dog will know it for good.

Have a Seat

With your pup facing you, pat its head then move your stylus down in a smooth stroke. The dog will sit and the training icon will appear. Tap it to record the voice command, then pat your puppy.





The command "Sit Down" is more recognizable than the shortened "Sit." Use it for a quick response.

HAPPY PUPPY

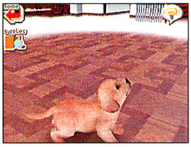
When your dog does something that makes you happy, return the favor by making it happy. Pet it and feed it treats that pop up onscreen.

GET TRICKY

Read the Dog Training Book in the Care section of the Supplies menu to learn tips for teaching more tricks.

Jump Up, Pup!

At its most playful, when your dog is kneeling and shaking its behind, it's ready to learn how to jump.



Tap the space above its head to coax the dog to leap. Record the voice command, then get ready for the next jump.

Put Her There!

Though dogs don't like it when you handle their paws, yours will make an exception when you're teaching it how to shake.

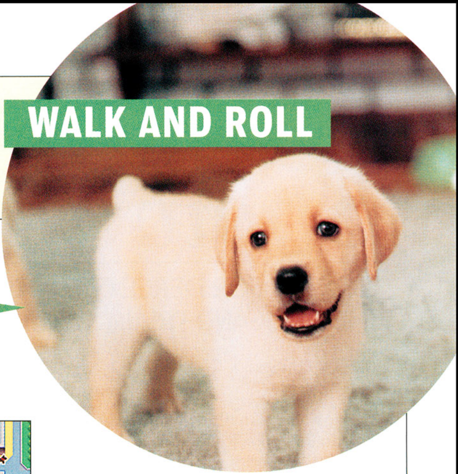
Tell a Lie

When your dog is in sitting position, scratch its head and move your stylus downward to make the dog lie down. From that position, you can teach your young charge to play dead and roll over.

Expert Advice

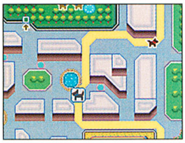
Your puppy can learn up to 14 tricks (but only a few per day). If you hit the limit, you'll have to make it forget some tricks before it can learn more.

WALK AND ROLL



WHERE YOU GO, I GO BUDDY. IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT.

WALK THE DOG



Playing, barking and learning tricks are all well and good, but the best form of puppy exercise is stretching the old legs. Repeated walks increase your dog's stamina.

PRESENTS PRESENCE

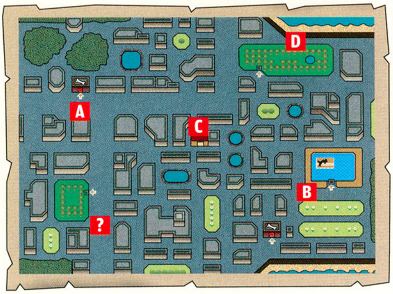
Your pup will grab some gifts, but it'll pass by those that are not on the map unless you give it a tug.

KNOW THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Choose a new route every time you take a walk, but make sure your dog has the stamina to go home.

A Discount Store
You'll find cheap and occasionally rare items at two discount stores.

B Gymnasium
Take your dog to the gym in preparation for agility trials.



? Encounters
Question marks denote set gift spots or dog encounters.

C Home
Every route must start and end at home base.

D Go Long
If you wander far, you'll likely find rare gifts. Keep reaching.

PARK IT

Look at the map before you draw the path. One park will have dogs in it. The other one will be empty (great for disc practice).

DON'T EAT THAT!

If your dog is hungry, it'll stop at garbage bags and try to chow down. Use the leash to pull your pup away.

A PUPPY SHOW PRIMER: TEACH YOUR

Show and Tell

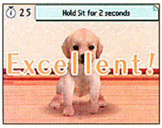
PREPARE FOR FIERCE COMPETITION ON THE TRICK-AND-TRIAL CIRCUIT.

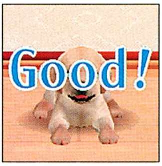
By Archie Hubbs

If I've learned anything in my years as a competition commentator, folks, it's that the dog with the best score usually wins. And victories earn you cash, which is just as good as money.

OBEDIENCE TRIALS

The first three classes call for different sets of tricks, starting with sit, shake and lie down in Beginner Class. Groom your little competitor right before the contest, as looks do figure into the scoring.

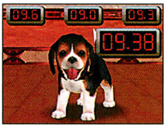




An instruction and a time limit will appear at the top of the screen. You must order your dog to perform the prescribed move before you can continue. The more you've practiced, the longer your dog will be able to hold the move.

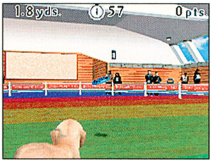
THREE JUDGES, ONE SCORE

After you've gone through the motions, you'll receive a one-to-ten score from each of three judges, based on your dog's responsiveness and grooming. The scores will be averaged out for the final number.

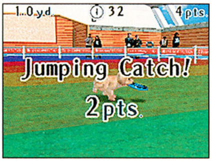


DISC COMPETITIONS

Train for disc competitions in empty parks and call your Nintendog with repeated taps on the screen as soon as it catches the disc. There's no time for dawdling.



If the throw is angled, your pup will have to run to the left or right as it lunges forward, making a successful catch less likely.



The longer the throw, the more points you'll earn, provided that your puppy catches it. Jumping catches carry a premium.

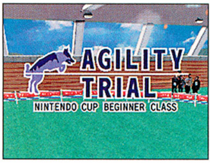
Expert Advice

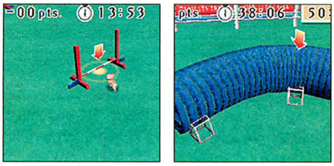
You're limited to three competitions a day. A top-three finish takes you to a higher class. Fourth or worse drops you a class, so practice a lot before you compete.

PUP TO BE A TOP DOG

AGILITY TRIALS

A competition is no place for a puppy to learn how to deal with a new apparatus. Walk it to the gym before each trial and train on every piece of equipment until your dog is comfortable.



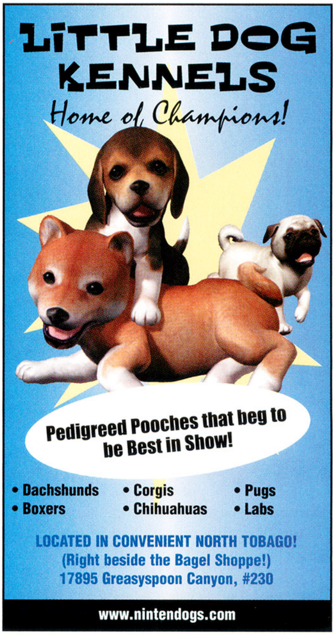


Lead your canine companion through the agility trial. At first, you'll have to double-tap objects to attract your dog to them. Eventually, it'll follow your stylus guidance in one free-flowing motion.

GRAB THE GOLD

If you're fast and free of errors, you'll earn the top spot in the rankings and move on to the next class, where you'll take on new challenges.

Congratulations!
1st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- Boxers
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- Pugs
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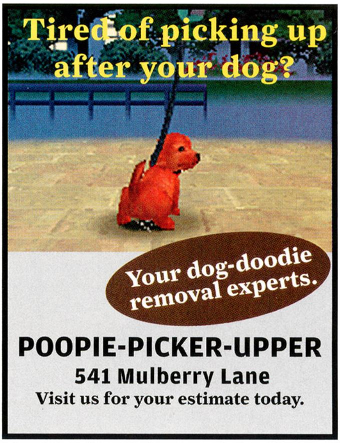
Tired of picking up after your dog?

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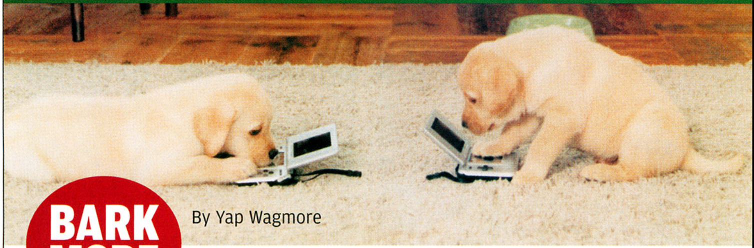
541 Mulberry Lane
Visit us for your estimate today.

Shake!

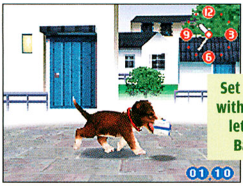
MAKE A CONNECTION WITH OTHER NINTENDOGS OWNERS BY WAY OF BARK MODE.



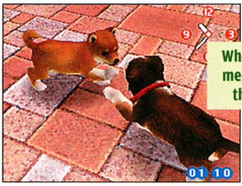
BARK MODE

By Yap Wagmore

It's a big world out there, with plenty of different types of Nintendogs and Nintendogs owners. By using Bark mode, you can exchange information and items with other owners through a wireless connection, and even make additional breeds available at your Nintendogs kennel.



Set up your dog with an item and let it roam in Bark mode.



When your pup meets another, they'll play.

BEST PAW FORWARD

The way you prepare for your meeting with another owner will have a big effect on the outcome. Beware. You can exchange breeds with a given owner only once.

1 STEP

Select Your Puppy

The puppy you choose to take into Bark mode will represent its breed. That breed will become available to owners you interact with.

2 STEP

Toy Exchange

If you have your dog take a toy into Bark mode, it will give that item to the next dog it meets through your wireless connection.

3 STEP

Meet and Greet

When your pup meets another pup, they'll both appear on your DS for as long as you wish, even after you're beyond the other Nintendogs owner's range.

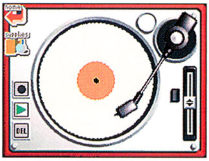
CLOSE AND PLAY

Once in Bark mode, you can close your DS. If another DS in Bark mode is near, your puppy will pipe up.

NINTENDO DS

THE WHITE ALBUM

Found in your Supplies menu, under Music, the White Record is capable of carrying a five-second-long message to another Nintendogs owner that you meet in Bark mode. You can personalize the message for each encounter.

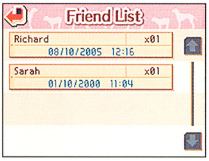


TESTING. ONE. TWO.

Select the White Record, tap the record button and drop the needle, then speak. You can layer multiple messages and erase the entire record.

NINTENDOGS NETWORKING

A successful meeting with another Nintendogs owner will result in that owner being added to your Friend List. Select the Go Out option, then the Info option to access the list and other important information.

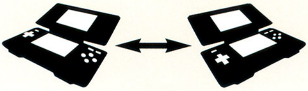


Richard x01
08/10/2005 12:16

Sarah x01
01/10/2000 11:04

NO STRINGS ATTACHED

When you're within range of another Bark-mode-enabled owner, the connection will commence and info will start exchanging instantly.



The connection range is the same as it is for any wireless play.

OPEN FIELD

The biggest benefit you'll receive from a wireless connection with another owner is an exchange of breed information. If the other owner's selected dog is of a breed that was not available at your kennel, it will become available after the meeting.

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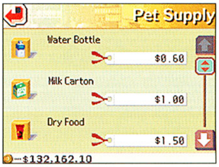
BRING YOUR PUPPY IN! • 14452 DEERPARK ROAD

BRINGING UP *Baby*

YOUR DOG DESERVES THE VERY BEST. GIVE IT EVERYTHING IT NEEDS.

By Diggery Dogsworth

Considering how much cash you can earn in competitions, items and accessories are relatively inexpensive and infinitely valuable to your dog. Visit the store often to look for new items.



Pet Supply

Water Bottle	$0.60
Milk Carton	$1.00
Dry Food	$1.50

$132,162.10

Dog Food Can

$3.00

Red Flying Disc

$6.00

Rubber Brush

$30.00

Wire Brush

$40.00

Short-Hair Shampoo

$1.30

Balloon

$0.20

Dry Food

$1.50

Water

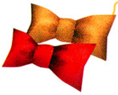
$0.60

Milk Carton

$1.00

Ribbons

$6.00



Red Leather Collar

$10.00

Jump Rope

varies

Natural Dog Food

$5.00

Black Leather Collar

$10.00

Dog Biscuits

varies

Jerky Treats

varies

Talking Bird

varies

Pull Rope

varies

Keyboard

varies

Cash Out

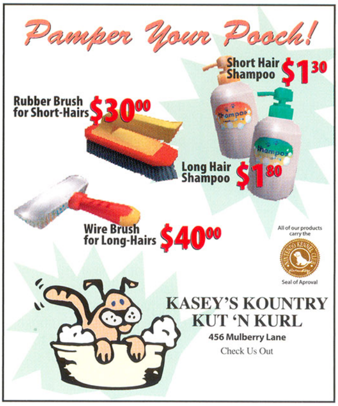
Although you could save your money for fancy furnishings and more dogs, the best thing that you can do with your greenbacks is to lavish them on the dogs that are currently in your care. Buy them the very best of everything that's available. After all, they deserve it.

Earn Scratch

If you want to purchase items, you've got to pay the price. The best way to cash in is to compete at the highest level—specialize in one event and go to the championship. You can also sell items at the secondhand shop for a little extra dough.

Expert Advice

The rarest items are not for sale, but rather are things that you will pick up on walks. Plan a route to the outskirts to investigate question marks, and be very observant while your dog is walking. If your pup passes by a present, give the leash a quick tug. Your dog will stop and pick up the gift.



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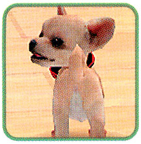
Talk to the ANIMALS

By "Doc" Sund

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING YOUR PUPPY'S MANY MOODS

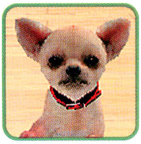
You speak English. Your puppy doesn't. But you can discern what your pup is trying to say through its body language. Watch your dog's moves , interpret the signs and react accordingly. You'll get along just fine.

FULL-BODY WAG



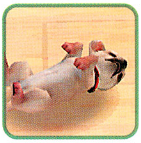
When your dog shakes its behind, it wants to play. Pull out your puppy's favorite toy and toss it around for a while.

IN-YOUR-FACE GREETING



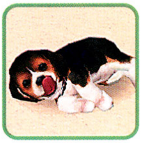
When you whistle for your puppy, it'll smother you with attention and put both front paws on the screen to show that it's happy to see you. Distract it with the stylus to make it back off.

FLOP DOWN, ROLL OVER



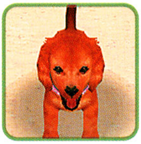
When you're training your dog, it'll drop to its side during downtime. Stroke its belly, then move the stylus over its body to make it roll over. Record the voice command and repeat.

SLEEPY TIME



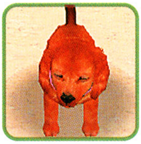
For all of their energy, puppies do like to relax and take naps. Even if your little charge is dog-tired, though, you'll be able to get it to play at the slightest of suggestions.

SNAP BACK



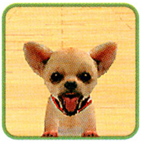
Your dog will never bite you, but it might snap at you just a bit and yelp if you're poking, prodding or touching a sensitive area, like its paws. After all, it needs those feet to stand up.

SHAKEN AND STIRRED



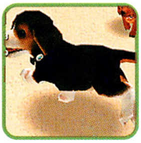
Nintendogs sometimes need a timeout in the middle of a training session. If your pup gets confused, frustration will ensue. Sit it down, pat its head and give it calm assurance.

SPEAKING OUT



When a siren sounds outside your Nintendogs house, your dog will react by barking. At the same time, the lightbulb icon will appear—time for you to teach pup the speak command.

WIGGED-OUT AND WACKY

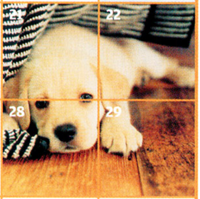


There's only so much you can feed into your puppy's little brain at once. Once your dog is done learning, it might just go nuts for a while. Let it be.

Calendar

THE KEY TO BONDING WITH YOUR DOG IS CONSISTENCY. USE OUR ACTIVITY CALENDAR TO PLAN YOUR TIME TOGETHER.

October

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
25	26	27	28	29	30	1 ☐ Name your puppy and teach it how to sit.
2 ☐ Take a walk to the discount store.	3 ☐ Walk to the park and practice disc-tossing.	4 ☐ Enter a disc competition.	5 ☐ Teach your pup to lie down and shake.	6	7 ☐ Practice all of your puppy's commands.	8 ☐ Bathe and brush your puppy.
9 ☐ Enter an obedience trial.	10 ☐ Walk to the gym for agility training.	11	12 ☐ Enter an agility trial.	13 ☐ Walk to the park to socialize.	14 ☐ Meet a friend in Bark mode.	15 ☐ Take an extralong walk to find presents.
16 ☐ Teach your pup to spin and roll over.	17	18	19 ☐ Bathe and brush your puppy.	20 ☐ Enter an advanced obedience trial.	21 	22
23 ☐ Practice disc-tossing at the park.	24 ☐ Enter a disc competition.	25 ☐ Walk to the gym for agility training.	26	27 ☐ Enter an agility trial.	28	29
30 ☐ Buy your puppy loads of new toys.	31	1	2	3	4	5

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Ask Dr. Paws*

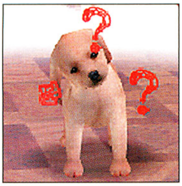
SHE KNOWS NINTENDOGS

* Dr. Paws is not a licensed veterinarian, nor does she play one on TV. In fact, "Dr." is more of an honorary title than an official designation.

CLASSROOM CONFUSION

My Labrador and I have had a communication breakdown. I've taught him several tricks, but sometimes when I try to record my voice command, Fluffers looks at me as if I'm speaking a different language, and question marks float around her head. What's going on?

-PETUNIA CLARK, MI



Dr. Paws: It's simple, Petunia. Red question marks indicate that you did not speak into the mic clearly. Blue marks mean that the new command is too similar to an existing command.

DISC DILEMMA

I haven't been able to advance very far in disc competitions, Doc. Do you have any pointers for disc-tossing success?

-HARLAN CRANE, MN

Dr. Paws: Go to an empty park and practice with your puppy. Toss the disc straight and far with a quick flip of the wrist. When your dog grabs the disc, tap the screen to get its attention so it develops the habit of returning to you quickly. While competing, try to get an extra toss in when there are just seconds left on the clock. If time runs out when the disc is in the air, the throw will still count.

POSSESSION OBSESSION

Hey, Dr. Paws. I'm a longtime fan, first-time writer. My Shiba Inu, Abigail, is the cutest dog ever, and I want to lavish her with accessories—hats and the like. I don't see much in the way of that sort of item in the stores. Where do I get them?

-STELLA MURPHY, WA

Dr. Paws: Walk Abigail to the fringes of the neighborhood, Stella. The best items are farthest from home. With every exercise, your dog's stamina will increase, allowing you to explore.

FOOD IS GOOD

Hi, Doc. How often should I feed and give water to my pug, Pikachu?

-RUFUS PARLIAMENT, MD

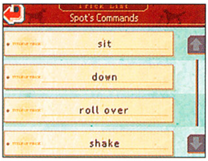
Dr. Paws: It pays to feed your dog on a regular schedule. You can also tell when Pikachu is hungry by looking at the dog's status screen.

TRICKY PROBLEM

I've taught my dog a lot of tricks and some of the voice commands are similar, leading to confusion. Is there any way that I can make my pup forget a few tricks so that I can start over?

-QUINCY JOHNSON, NY

Dr. Paws: Yes, Quincy. You'll find a link to a trick list on the dog's Status screen. Tap it, then select the trick(s) you want to erase with a tap. You'll also want to erase tricks when you hit the limit of 14 learned tricks and want to teach your dog another one.



DIRTY DOG

My Shetland sheepdog, Sir Barks-a-lot, has been taken over by little black specks and is scratching a lot. What's going on, doc?

-JERMAINE DIXON, AZ

Dr. Paws: Your dog has fleas! Give him a good bath with the right kind of shampoo (long-hair shampoo for a Shetland sheepdog), then brush him with a wire brush. If you keep him on a regular bathing schedule, the fleas won't return.

PUPPY FEVER

I like puppies, Dr. Paws. Can't get enough of them. I've got two at home and three in the hotel, but I'd like more breeds to choose from. How do I get the kennel to bring in more dogs?

-TJ CLARK, CA

Dr. Paws: When you interface with another Nintendogs owner—one who has a different version of the game—that owner's selected breed will become available to you. Also, new breeds will gradually appear as you gain Trainer Points.

Tricksters TRAINING

- **Does your puppy ignore you?**
- **Does your puppy run away?**
- **Does your puppy forget tricks?**
- **Do you fail obedience training?**

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Welcome to Animal Crossing DS
Population: Growing!
Beth
Hmmm... well...
Why don't you sit here?
Please, I insist!
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CANCEL
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